

**THE  
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JOURNAL**

*Edited by Doug Elliott and John Holden*



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## EDITORIAL

Issue of this 'bumper' Centenary Journal comes at the end of our term as Joint Editors. After years of amicable teamwork disagreement surfaced in the tenth year of our collaboration, but gratifyingly this was due to the pressures of sifting and selecting through an abundance of articles. From the magnificent response of Club members the product of our labours is pre-eminent from a quantity viewpoint, and with hard covers and other production 'trimmings' it can be claimed as prominent in appearance. More importantly we trust that the quality of the contents will be recognized.

As Editors we have generally kept faith with aims of limiting subjects within a Lake District theme and of assembling records on Club history and activities. Particular thanks are due to those targeted as contributors for identified subjects. Initially Members are brought up to date by John Wilkinson's chronicles of events succeeding *The First Fifty Years* in the 1956 Journal. Unfortunately there is space for only a brief résumé on the history of Club huts, but the results of Maureen Linton's comprehensive research will be made available elsewhere. An informed update on the climbing scene, continuing on from a series of articles in the *100 Years of Rock Climbing Journal* of 1986, is presented by prolific pioneer of new routes, writer of guidebooks and illustrious illustrator Al Phizacklea; and from Guidebooks Editor Stephen Reid there is a knowledgeable and detailed account of Lakeland guidebooks. It was during discussions on the Club's centenary when desires surfaced for a separate anthology from past Journals. In the absence of action George Watkins was commissioned to produce a Miscellany, to include within the Centenary Journal, and his thoughtful assortment is clearly a labour of love. Again limits on space led to some pruning, but aspirations may be appeased via an electronic version of early Journals outlined in the commentary by Roderick Smith.

Though prestige for the Club was enhanced as a result of Alan Hinkes becoming the first Briton to summit all fourteen 8,000 metre peaks in the Himalaya, his feat presented a dilemma for Editors adopting a Lake District theme. A title of 'Keswick to Kangchenjunga' was suggested, leading to the article 'Helvellyn to Himalaya'. At lower levels of elevation, but not necessarily lesser clation, other members have tales to tell, recollections to reflect and views to voice. Together with major Centenary articles there are numerous and notable contributions on places, people and performances exhibiting pleasure, passion and perhaps poignancy. As always our Journal is the work of FRCC members, and once again quality writings have relaxed the role of Editors. We are grateful to all contributors over the period of our Joint Editor stint.



We wish our successors well, and we are sure they will appreciate a truism whereby most people going onto the crags and fells also read about them. We have previously noted how very few activities spawn such a huge volume of literature as do climbing and mountaineering, and in the FRCC we have writers as well as readers. They recognise the Journal as an asset to underpin the Club, and we trust this will not change.

The first Editor of the FRCC Journal, Edward Scantlebury, forecast the Club: "will last as long as there are hills in the Lake District". In the half-centenary Journal a prediction by Frank Simpson was that after another fifty years the Club's history would be brought up to date: "printed in a Journal with a bright red cover". To continue the tradition of predicting the inevitable, we have no doubt that the Journal celebrating one hundred and fifty years of our Club (and some current members will be around to see it!) will contain novel sentiments, fresh insights and be in red covers. Long may the Club and the Journal flourish.

For this Centenary Journal the various writers of articles, photographers and others are acknowledged alongside their contributions. We appreciate all their support, together with recognition of Jill Aldersley for her fine painting of Napes Needle, and of Al Phizacklea for his action on the Wasdale Roof depicted on front and back of the dust wrapper.

Doug Elliott

John Holden

## THE SECOND HALF

*John Wilkinson*

*"not so much a Club as a way of life"*

*Frank Simpson. Fell and Rock Journal 1956.*

In order to meet the editorial deadline, Frank Simpson, in his splendid account of the first 50 years of the Club's history was obliged to end it a year short of the half century. It is therefore, from this point, 1955, that the present account begins, although for the sake of continuity there are a few overlaps with the previous period. As in Frank's article, it is not possible to separate the growth of the Club from the personalities of its leading figures over the years, and I must apologise in advance for any omissions on this score and for events that have gone unrecorded in this article due to lack of space. Unless stated otherwise, all names mentioned are those of Club members. However, unlike Frank's account which covered mainly the constitutional and family history of the Club in chronological order, the Club's history in the second half century is so diverse that it is perhaps best described in several sections dealing with the many and varied aspects of Club life, although within each section events are described, where possible, in chronological order.

### **The Huts**

The first 50 years of the Club marked a period of expansion unique in British climbing club history. Not only did the membership increase to a level that made the Club the largest climbing club in Britain, but also over a period of just 16 years, the Club acquired huts in four Lakeland valleys. Donations and interest free loans from members largely financed the acquisition of these properties, but there is no doubt that the Club was financially stretched. So when the Club had the possibility of purchasing further huts, the Gospel Hall in Coniston at the end of 1953 and another in Patterdale in 1959, the Club Treasurer Dick Plint, called a halt. The Club had to enter a phase of consolidation with the paying off of debts: no more huts for the time being!

During that long hot dry summer of 1955, Club members having paid the annual subscription of 1 guinea (£1.05p) and an entrance fee of 10/- (50p), heading for the Lakes, filled up their cars with petrol at 4/4d. a gallon (4.9p. per litre); they might arrive at Raw Head 3/- (15p) per night, pausing perhaps to admire the hut warden's brand new Jaguar Mark I, 2.4 litre. with overdrive (£1,444-17-00) parked outside before going up the valley to the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel for a pint 1/3d (6.3p.).

Since the conversion of the Barn in 1950, Raw Head had become by far the most popular hut, and by the end of the decade several improvements were put in hand, the most important being the installation of electricity to both the cottage and the barn. This was made possible by a legacy of £1,000 left to the Club for this purpose by Dr. Theodore Burnett (1908 - 1956) who died in 1956 aged 79, the only member to have served two terms as President. The original intention by the North West Electricity Board was to supply the huts by overhead cable but shrewd negotiation and the payment of an additional £16-10-0 over and above the £15.p.a. levied for five years resulted in supply by underground cable. The cottage and barn were wired by a group of Club 'experts'. The kitchen in the barn was extended by demolishing the small lean-to on the gable end and building over it to provide washing and toilet facilities on the first floor. Sleeping accommodation in the barn was increased by the installation of three-tier bunks, with the proviso that the top tier could be removed if it was felt that there was too much congestion. This has never been done despite some congestion, particularly in the kitchen, at popular meets. Although the increase in sleeping accommodation undoubtedly swelled hut revenues, the downside was that over the years there have been several instances of restless sleepers turning in their sleeping bags to find themselves making a speedy unscheduled and often painful descent. The lucky ones landed on the heaps of rucksacks, boots and ropes cluttering up the floor, and emerged relatively unscathed, but one fall resulted in serious injury, and a substantial claim against the Club's insurance. Guard-rails have now been fitted to the top bunks in all huts, which should prevent recurrence of accidents, although access and descent from the top bunks is more difficult.

The Club has insurance policies with the B.M.C. and a Professional Indemnity Policy which together provide a level of protection for members and officers. The Committee has studied, at great length, the future structure and status of the Club in the complex world of litigation and legislation: not least the Club's responsibility for Health and Safety. It was put to the AGM in 2003 that the Club should consider a move to the status of a company limited by guarantee. This would give Officers and Club members increased support and protection by having limited liability in the event of a successful claim against the Club. After detailed examination of this scheme, it became apparent that this would involve the transfer of Club huts to the company thereby incurring the payment of an enormous and unacceptable amount of stamp duty and land tax. An alternative scheme involving the setting up of two trading companies to be responsible for running the huts and guidebooks was also studied in detail. Unfortunately full protection of members from individual liability would still not be provided. So another possibility considered was the incorporation of the Club by being registered as a Charity. At an Extraordinary General Meeting

held prior to the A.G.M. in November 2005, the Committee's recommendation that the Club should not proceed with the formation of these companies was accepted; and a decision on the possible registration of the Club as a Charity was deferred until the Governmental White Paper on Charities had been published and studied.

In addition to these administrative and legal issues the acquisition of huts continued throughout the second fifty years of the Club's existence, and this has been largely due to the generosity of members. In 1963 Bentley Beetham (1919 - 1963) died. Honorary Member since his participation in the 1924 Everest Expedition, he was largely responsible for the renaissance of Borrowdale as a climbing area and wrote the 1953 rock-climbing guide. He bequeathed £5,000 to the Club with no directions as to its use. A subcommittee was set up to consider various options for the use of this legacy: these included a hut in the eastern part of the Lakes, a headquarters building, an extension of The Salving House, a hut in Ennerdale, or general expenditure on existing huts. The President Dick Cook pre-empted a decision by suggesting that it would be fitting if the legacy were used in Borrowdale by replacing The Salving House with a larger hut. To this end, he bought an excellent property which had just come on the market, Bella Vista, a house on the Manesty Road, 1 mile outside Grange. He offered it to the Club at the price he had paid for it, £5,750. However, the committee voted against a new hut in Borrowdale, and decided to leave it to the AGM to decide how the legacy should be spent. The various options were put to the meeting, which voted unanimously in favour of a hut in the Ullswater area. A subcommittee was convened to look for suitable premises and shortly found a house on the main Kirkstone-Ullswater Road near Low Hartsop known as Brotherswater Cottage. The asking price of £3,500 was acceptable. £2,103 was spent on converting the property to a hut, with a further £800 for conveying, architect's fees and equipment, an overrun, and the Club needed to borrow £1,000. The hut was named Beetham Cottage and was opened on Sunday October 31<sup>st</sup> 1965 after the Annual Dinner by John Beetham, Bentley's brother: it rained heavily and the proceedings were conducted indoors.

Another legacy from former Assistant Hut Secretary, Bryan Greaves of £900 was used to good effect in Birkness barn. This was re-structured to give a draught-proof common room with a fireplace instead of the ugly iron stove which occupied the centre of the room with its flue projecting through the men's dormitory. A separate entrance hall, drying room, improved washing facilities and the creation of an upper lounge combined to make an immense improvement to the hut.

At the Committee meeting in November 1971 the warden of Birkness, Stan Thompson expressed concern about the condition of the Coach House, which at that time was used solely as a fuel store. This valuable piece of

underused property was in a terminal state of decline with a bad roof, rotten and dangerous floor and a crumbling porch, which was parting company with the main building. It was clearly in need of repair, or better still, development with a view to providing additional accommodation for the Club. Stan persuaded his brother Harry, an architect living in Chapel Stile, to draw up provisional plans for converting the property into two self-contained flats. These could well be used to provide accommodation for families to supplement that provided by the cottage, which was often overbooked, or as an overflow from the barn. The estimated cost was £5,000. The Committee discussed the project at length and the Treasurer indicated that bequests and donations of £1,500 were available, and that there was a possibility of a discretionary grant under the Housing Act of 1969. This would enable the conversion to be financed without borrowing. On this basis the Club applied for outline planning permission. However it shortly became apparent that the project was doomed since the local authorities in the Lakes had changed their policy regarding discretionary grants, and the Club was not eligible. The project was resurrected in 1979 when there was a possibility of a 75% grant from the Sports Council but again this was not forthcoming. In 1980 an appeal to members to donate or loan money for the conversion resulted in a promise of £3,500 against the estimated conversion cost of £10,000, and again the project was put on hold. By 1989 the porch of the Coach House was declared unsafe and was scheduled for demolition.

By this time interest had switched to the possibility of a hut in Scotland, using the Waters legacy, but happily this released £35,000 of Club funds for refurbishment of Lakeland huts, and also £20,000 over 5 years for the development of the Coach House. At the 1991 AGM, the Treasurer reported that £40,000 could be made available for the conversion of the Coach House, leaving reserves intact. Planning permission was granted and the conversion finally was under construction. The President Syd Clark eventually opened the Coach House on November 14<sup>th</sup> 1992.

Meanwhile the North West Electricity Board had agreed to run a cable to Wasdale Head and offered to supply Brackenclose with electricity for £450, which was completed by July 1977. 'Professionals' wired the hut (a sign of the times). Birkness also received electricity at the same time. In June 1980, the extension to The Salving House kitchen was declared open with a splendid party with an abundance of food, drink and late night dancing in a packed hut. Built at a cost of £4,300, the extension was a tremendous improvement over the cramped conditions previously endured.

At several Committee meetings in 1985, the possibility of the Club acquiring a hut outside the Lakes was discussed, mainly as a result of a legacy of £5,000 left to the Club by R. Case Newton. If the Club could not afford another

hut entirely, some £15,000 to £20,000 being available from Club funds, the possibility of joint ownership with another club was considered. Subsequently exploratory talks were held with the Rucksack Club for the purchase of a hut in Scotland. An agreement for the joint project was drawn up and presented at the AGM, where concern was expressed regarding practical problems which could result from such a joint venture. After further discussion in committee it was decided that the Scottish hut should be solely a Fell and Rock venture, particularly since there was a possibility of an interest free loan from the Scottish Sports Council, although this was later withdrawn. By April 1987 it was decided that a hut in the Glencoe area was desirable and Vice-President John A. Hartley was asked to locate and buy a hut, the Club to provide some £45,000 for the project. However, the venture received a boost as a result of a legacy of £46,578 left to the Club by G.C. Waters. After looking at several properties, which for various reasons were unsatisfactory, the Old Police Station at Kinlochleven came on the market in January 1989. The property consisted of a bungalow and a large civil defence outbuilding, which was suitable for future development. The Club put in a bid of £40,350, which was accepted, although it was clear that a considerable amount of cash would have to be spent to convert the bungalow to a hut. £5,000 was made available initially, and on May 9<sup>th</sup> 1990 the President David Miller opened the hut, now named Waters Cottage. The project begun by President David Roberts and continued by President Hilary Moffat had finally come to fruition.

It was probably at the Club's Alpine meet at Argentière la Bessée in 1994 that the possibility of the Club acquiring a hut in France was first broached. John Robinson undertook the arduous task of investigating the project, which involved among other things a visit to London to consult a barrister regarding French property law. The 1995 AGM endorsed the suggestion that a property be leased rather than bought. Debates rattled on, and a referendum of members showed that less than 200 expressed a firm commitment to using a French hut. Finally at the 1998 AGM the project was abandoned.

In July 2000, the Club received a legacy of £218,607-71 from the estate of Miss Yvonne Campbell-Bruce, a non - member who had inherited the estate of Miss Mollie Hyde-Parker a Club member since 1938, on the understanding that on her death the Club would be the beneficiary, and that the money would be used to purchase another property. The AGM discussed the legacy after the Committee recommended that the Club establish a hut in the Spey valley. It was agreed that members be canvassed regarding in which area of Britain would a hut would be of the greatest benefit to the Club. The result of the referendum showed overwhelming support for a hut on Speyside, Wales coming a poor second. A search of the area resulted in the purchase of Karn House in Aviemore for £128,411. In all, the Club spent a total of around £155,000 to fully convert the premises.

The Hut Secretary Ken Jackson devised a plan to utilise the remainder of the legacy on improvements to the other huts: at Waters Cottage, the Civil Defence building was converted for hut use; at Raw Head, the fuel store to the rear of the cottage was re-roofed, and an archive store built inside; a new car parking area was constructed behind the Barn; at Brackenclose there were various improvements including pointing, and the replacement of the metal framed windows by double glazed hardwood framed windows; and at The Salving House the toilet and washing facilities were reorganised.

Over the years there have been a few problems with the huts, some of them due to natural phenomena, others man made. In February 1962, 5.2 inches of rain fell in Langdale in one night and Raw Head Cottage was flooded with 3ft of water inside the building. One inner wall was burst but otherwise there was surprisingly little damage. Insurance against flooding was belatedly taken out, and a parapet was built by the back door of the cottage to deflect future floodwater away from the building. In the same year, on August 10<sup>th</sup> a severe storm resulted in damage to the grounds of Brackenclose and its access road, which was washed out after the Lingmell Gill overflowed. The National Trust, who were responsible for road maintenance brought in an excavator, which was used to repair the road and remove some huge boulders deposited in the hut grounds. The Club made an ex-gratia payment to the Trust of £125. On New Years Day 1991, Beetham Cottage was flooded 4inches deep as a result of the blocking of the Horsemen Bridge by floodwater debris, which was subsequently cleared by the Cumberland C.C. Highways and Engineering Department. The hut required some remedial work, consisting of the removal of damaged plaster followed by waterproof rendering and plastering. In the autumn of 2004, the bridge over the Lingmell Beck was closed after being damaged by a heavy vehicle. Access by car to Brackenclose was not possible until the bridge was re-opened around Easter 2005.

Security of the huts has always been a problem, particularly with the unauthorised use of the huts by non- members, the non- payment of hut fees by some members and guests alike, which is still an ongoing problem today, and the theft of hut property. In those early halcyon days in Brackenclose and Raw Head Cottage, hut fees were deposited in light weight metal boxes screwed to the inside of the hut doors, and secured by small padlocks. This state of affairs changed after the war, when a newly elected member bored with civilian life after service with the commandos joined a gang of Liverpool burglars. Among several properties burgled, including the C.C. hut Helyg , he broke into the Raw Head Cottage safe and made off with the contents (around £2,000 at today's values). He was eventually apprehended tried, sentenced and imprisoned. As a result more substantial safes were installed in all the huts and members were encouraged to pay their hut dues by cheque instead of cash.

Owing to its isolated position, Brackenclose is particularly vulnerable. In 1970 around a dozen ash dining-room chairs donated to Brackenclose on its opening by Katherine (later Lady) Chorley disappeared without trace. There was no evidence of forced entry and it was clear that a hut key had been used to gain access. In 1992 the Biffa waste bin was stolen resulting in a claim on the Club's insurance. Bookcases in all the huts were well stocked with mountaineering books, some of which, for example O.G. Jones's "Rock Climbing in the English Lake District", would cost several hundred pounds each to replace at today's prices. Between 1970 and 1977, of the 343 climbing books lodged in hut bookcases, 135 were stolen. As a result all valuable books were removed from the huts and deposited in the Club Library.

Up to the early 1960s, hut keys were left in the custody of adjacent hotels or farms, and were frequently obtained by persons purporting to be members: the custodians seldom demanded evidence of membership or authorisation to use the huts. To counteract this, Club membership cards were issued to members in the hope that custodians would ask for identification before issuing a key. This did not work particularly well, and in 1977 the huts were fitted with a special suite of locks, and members were invited to purchase a key at a £1 each solely for their own use.

In 1974, at the instigation of the British Mountaineering Council, the Committee agreed that Brackenclose, Birkness Barn and Raw Head Cottage could be added to the B.M.C.'s list of huts available for use by affiliated clubs. This was a grave error, and 18 months later the Club withdrew from the scheme since we had been flooded with applications from non-reciprocal clubs, and members were often outnumbered in the huts. At Brackenclose for example, guest bed nights amounted to 75% of the total. This exercise caused much extra work for the hut wardens, particularly since some clubs had adopted a demanding attitude. Furthermore, the condition of the huts after visits by many of these clubs was deplorable. The use of Club huts by B.M.C. affiliated clubs, other than those with which we have reciprocal arrangements, has never been repeated.

During the second half-century of the Club where membership has expanded by some 30%, five further buildings have entered hut use. Beetham Cottage, Birkness Coach House, Waters Cottage and its Civil Defence Building, and Karn House. In addition, extensions and improvements in the older huts have resulted in enhanced accommodation. Currently 237 places are available in the huts compared with 132 in 1956, an increase of 80%

Since the opening of the Coach House in November 1992, Birkness has become by far the most popular hut, with Raw Head now relegated to second place. Concern that the acquisition of Karn House would greatly affect the attendance at Waters Cottage has not been realised. Whilst there has been a fall



in Waters hut income of about 20% in the year 2002-2003, at the same time the combined income from both Scottish huts has doubled.

With enhanced hut accommodation, the income from hut fees has risen dramatically over the half century. In the year to June 1955, the Club's income was the highest since its inception and was mainly due to increased hut use: hut income of £902 resulted in a surplus of £356 (39.5%) after deduction of running costs. In the year to June 2005, hut income of £45,627 from over 10,000 bed nights resulted in a running surplus of £14,866 but an overall surplus of only £5,044 (11%) due to heavy expenditure on repairs, equipment, maintenance and various improvements.

As in 1955 when the Club Treasurer decreed that there should be no more huts for the time being, and that there should be a period of consolidation, there is currently a feeling in many quarters of the Club that perhaps the time has arrived to take stock. After all, the Club has the largest number of huts of any club in Britain, and further 31 huts owned by kindred clubs with whom we have reciprocal rights are also available to members.

### Meets

Since its inception, the social life of the Club has revolved around meets. Prior to the acquisition of club huts, meets were sparse and were held mainly in hotels. For example in 1936, of the 15 meets held, 12 were at hotels, 1 at a farm and 2 at other club huts. By 1955, meets had increased to 18, 11 of them in Club huts. By way of contrast, in 2006, 63 meets will be held.

Throughout the whole of the second half-century, three meets have been the principal social functions in the Club's calendar: the Annual Dinner, the New Year meet and the Scottish meet. Between 1946 and 1987 the Annual Dinner was held in Keswick at the Royal Oak Hotel, the New Year meet initially at the Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel, then at Raw Head, and the Scottish meet at various hotels in the Highlands. Invariably all were oversubscribed. Since 1987 the Annual Dinner has been held at the Shap Wells Hotel.

The main dining room at the Royal Oak, the Poet's Room, could seat 250, but since applications were usually well in excess of 300, a ballot was held. Precedence was given first to the official Club guests, then Original Members, Honorary Members and Past Presidents, then members without guests and lastly members with guests. (A system that may well be resurrected for the Club's Centenary Dinner in 2006). The surplus over 250 were accommodated in the ballroom of the Royal Oak, which seated 50 diners, and any further excess in another hotel, usually the George or the Queen. A Club Vice-President hosted each overflow dinner and all the diners congregated in the Poet's Room for the speeches. In 1955 the price of the dinner was 10/- (50p), good value for money with four speeches and a musical interlude. The latter was invariably



Back Row L to R – Graham Wilson, Lawson Cook, Derek Plint, John Appleyard,  
Theo Chorley, Rusty Westmorland

Front Row L to R – Alan (AB) Hargreaves, Howard Somervell, Jonathan Stables,  
Leslie Somervell

### Russian Meet 1959



the high spot of the evening, where songs written by John Hirst and often performed as a duet with Harry Spilsbury, were aimed usually at the chief guest or the President. In 1955, the chief guests were John Jackson and Charles Evans (A. C.) who was the recipient of Hirst's wit with his rendering of "The Conqueror of Kangchenjunga", (F.R.C.C.J. 1956, p368). Hirst and Spilsbury's fame was such that they were frequently retained for other clubs' dinners. Despite the Club Secretary's instructions to speakers as to the length of their contributions, there was frequently an overrun resulting in a panic-stricken rush for the bars before time was called.

Despite the onset of petrol rationing brought about as a result of the Suez invasion, which had surprisingly little effect on hut revenues as members formed car pools, the 1956 Jubilee Dinner was a great success. Perhaps the most important social event in the Club's 50 years history, the dinner now priced at 12/6d. was oversubscribed with 425 applications for tickets. Guests of honour were four Original Members, George Abraham, Henry Braithwaite, Jonathan Stables and J.B. Wilton. A huge birthday cake in the shape of a relief map of the central Lakes with the Napes Needle in the middle was cut by Eve Appleyard using an ice axe. One feature of the Jubilee Celebration was a splendid exhibition in the Keswick Moot Hall of photographs and colour slides taken by members.

The second and for many the most enjoyable function was the New Year meet at the O.D.G. Langdale. This had been an annual event since 1950 when Sid and Jammy Cross took over the lease of the hotel and continued until they retired in 1970, marking the end of an era. The O.D.G. could accommodate only 85 diners many of whom were staying at the hotel, the rest at Raw Head. Competition to get in was fierce, and one member who rang the hotel late was rebuffed by an exasperated Jammy who asked him if he thought the O.D.G. had elastic walls. There were no speeches, but the entertainment was well organised with slide shows, song sessions, a conga through the hotel and the traditional bringing in of the New Year. On New Year's Day, the whole meet was entertained to tea at Raw Head. All good things usually came to an end and after twenty years at the O.D.G., Sid and Jammy took a well-earned retirement and moved down the valley to Clappersgate. Unfortunately, the new management of the O.D.G. had taken an unaccountable dislike to the Club and could not be persuaded to continue to host the New Year meet. Other clubs who, for many years had held dinners at the O.D.G. were treated in a similar fashion with the result that complaints were made to the National Trust regarding the conduct of their tenant. These were of no avail, and some fourteen years were to elapse, together with a change of management, before the Club was once again made welcome at the O.D.G.

In the meantime, the problem was where to hold the New Year meet, suitable hotels being difficult to find at such short notice. Tom Meredith, the warden of Raw Head came up with a solution; we would hold the meet in the hut. Tom arranged for trestle tables to be borrowed from the Chapel Stile church hall and invested in new cutlery for the hut. Members volunteered to provide various courses for the dinner and to act as cooks and waiters. The evening kicked off with a sherry party in the Cottage and, with the fire in the Barn suitably damped down, around 60 members and guests sat down to a splendid five course dinner. A bar was laid on by the Sun Hotel, Coniston. After dinner, a slide show was followed by dancing and at midnight, punch was served to welcome in the New Year. With the exception of two years when the meet was held in an hotel in Ambleside, the meet continued at Raw Head until New Year 1985 when it ran for five years in tandem with the meet at the O.D.G. The meet was discontinued in 1991 owing to lack of interest. From thereon, private parties organised their New Year celebrations in the huts, particularly at Waters Cottage and Kam House.

Since May 1946 when the first Scottish meet was held at Corrie on the Isle of Arran, this meet has been a huge success, and has been held every year at hotels all over the Highlands. There have, however, been a few contretemps. Petrol rationing was still in force in May 1957, which complicated arrangements for the meet in Ullapool. However some thirty people attended the meet, travelling in a specially chartered coach with collection points in Preston, Kendal, Penrith, Carlisle and Inverness: former President Leslie Somervell arrived astride a Lambretta scooter. In 1964 after 19 years of incident-free meets, parties from the Aulguish meet were on An Teallach; former President Harry Spilsbury was posing for a photo on the summit of Sgurr Fiona when he slipped and fell over 100feet sustaining severe injuries. The President, Dick Cook made a descent to Dundonell in three-quarters of an hour to raise the alarm. Fortunately a party of Royal Marine Cadets together with a climbing doctor was available and, with the assistance of the police and locals, Harry was taken down by night to Loch Shellag where a boat was waiting. A Landrover then transported Harry over rough ground from the head of the loch to an ambulance at Gruinard and then to hospital in Inverness. He made a full recovery, but was not so fortunate six years later. In May 1970 the meet at Achnasheen was struck by tragedy on Ben Alligin. The sudden arrival of a fierce electric storm forced the party to make a rapid retreat from The Horns during which Harry Spilsbury had a fall and sustained severe head injuries from which he died on the mountain. Awarded the O.B.F. for his work as Senior Tax Inspector for Liverpool, Harry was also a skilled craftsman and soon after joining the club in 1945 he became involved in the conversion of Raw Head Barn, followed by The Salving House and Birkness. Later he was heavily involved in the B.M.C.'s project for the 1939-45 War

Memorial Hut at Glenbrittle, Skye, where he supervised the work and did the final fitting out himself. The B.M.C. made him a "Freemen of the Hut". Whilst a number of our members have served as presidents of all the major climbing clubs in Britain, and the B.M.C. Harry was the only one to have worn the triple crown: President of the Fell and Rock, the Rucksack Club and the Wayfarers Club. He was also an honorary member of both the Wayfarers Club and the Yorkshire Ramblers Club, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Outward Bound Mountain School, Eskdale. His untimely death was a great loss to all these organisations.

The Scottish hotel meets have since continued with great success to date, the only minor irritation being the effect of the foot and mouth disease which denied access to many of the peaks in Argyll during the 2001 meet at Taynuilt. A repeat meet the following year remedied the deficiencies. The hotel meets have also been supplemented for many years by highly successful camping meets in the highlands.

Since Easter 1988 when a rock-climbing meet was held at Geménos in Provence, the Easter French camping meet has had an unbroken run to the present time. It has proved to be one of the most popular meets in the calendar, and is usually patronised by around 80 members and guests. Many areas have been visited including Orpierre, the Gorges du Tarn, and the Dentelles de Montmirail. The brilliant rock climbing has satisfied the aspirations of even the hardest sports climbers.

Climbing in the Alps has always been popular with members. After the war, the Alpine meet was resurrected, with meets held in Arolla in 1947 and Zermatt in 1948. However interest in attending Alpine meets declined although individual members continued to visit the Alps on a regular basis. In 1990 the Alpine meet was restored to the meets list, and some 52 members and guests attended the meet in Randa: 19 out of the 26 4000m. peaks in the area were climbed. The meet has been an annual event ever since with many areas of the French, Swiss and Italian Alps and the Dolomites visited.

In recent years, the meets list has presented a large and varied programme. In addition to the usual hut meets including several joint meets with kindred clubs, there have been family meets, prospective members' meets, mid-week meets and B.M.C. Youth meets, both now discontinued. There have been meets in many mountain areas of Britain including the winter climbing meet on Ben Nevis based on the C.I.C. hut, which has always been oversubscribed. Meets in several venues abroad included two meets in the Pamirs held jointly with the Sverdlövska Alpine Club. There have been downhill skiing meets and ski mountaineering meets in the Alps and the Urals. In addition there have been fringe activities including cycling meets, a fell-race meet, a Hebridean sailing meet, a music meet, a

bonfire meet and for many years a dancing meet, the Ceilidh, held in the Rosthwaite Village Hall (now discontinued). There is even a "temperance" meet held at Birkness at the request of some highly sociable members.

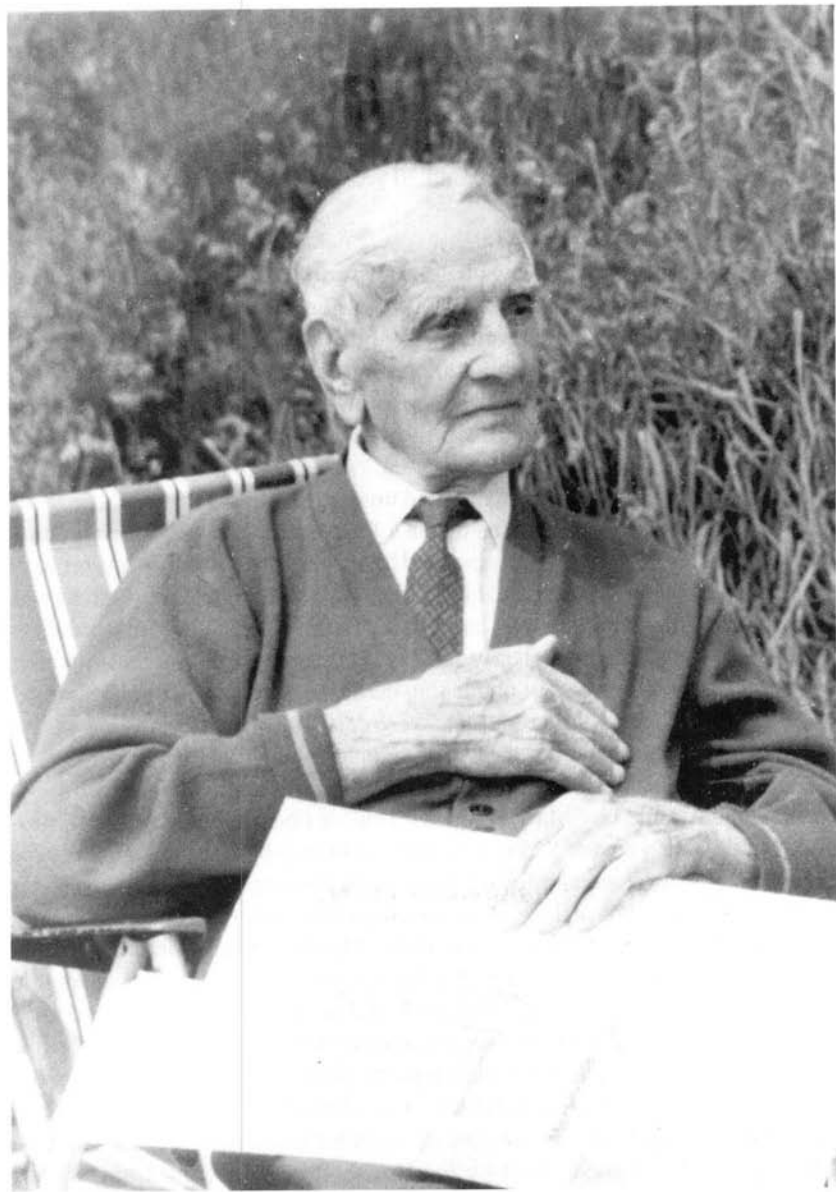
Probably inspired by the highly successful Raw Head New Year meet there has been for many years now a series of unofficial hut meets to celebrate the birthdays of members. Indeed it would be an indication of the regeneration of the Club if, instead of the celebration of the birthdays of 50, 60 and 70 year olds, there was a celebration of 20 and 30 year olds!

### **Communications**

Publications have always been an essential part of Club life, and the first of these was the Journal. Since 1907 when the first journal appeared, there has been a continuous run as an annual publication until 1970, then every two years after that. There are two major problems associated with producing journals: persuading members to write articles and having sufficient cash to finance their publication.

When Donald Murray was elected President in 1964, he inherited a number of acute problems which required urgent attention. The Club's finances which had been carefully nurtured by Dick Plint for over 16 years were in total disarray, and the new Treasurer was asked to resign: John Kendrick was brought in to sort out the mess, a task that took him two years. The Club Journal was also running late, which was not entirely the Editor's fault since his appeals to members for contributions clearly fell on deaf ears. Furthermore, it had become apparent that the cost of publishing the Journal every year was becoming unsustainable. Indeed future journals were destined to appear at two-year intervals. Nevertheless, the Editor's office changed hands.

At Donald's instigation another publication was launched in March 1965, the Chronicle, edited by Mary Pearson. This was basically a newsletter, produced initially at a cost of £25 to circulate 1,000 members, to be sent out twice a year. It included general information of particular interest to members, and it also enabled decisions arrived at by the committee to be known more rapidly than through the annual reports to the AGM. Members would therefore be kept more closely in touch with current affairs of the Club. Over the years, the Chronicle has proved to be a great success, and since August 1988 has appeared quarterly. Issue No 1 included changes in officers, lists of new members, births marriages and deaths, hut news, meet reports, guide book news, the library and general information. It recorded that Lt. Col. Harold (Rusty) Westmorland had been awarded the O.B.E. for services to mountain rescue and the news that the Glen Brittle Hut in Skye, built by the British Mountaineering Council, was opened on April 1st. 1965.



H. M. Kelly

The Club's other major publications are the guidebooks. The first series of guides were printed in the *Journal* from 1922-26 and at the same time issued as separate booklets (the Red Guides). Harry Kelly edited the later 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Series. By the time Donald Murray became President there were major problems since there was total lack of progress in producing the 4<sup>th</sup> Series of guides and some senior members of the Club were in favour of ending guide book production. By this time the 3<sup>rd</sup> Series was well out of date and virtually unobtainable in the shops. Furthermore the climbing public had become increasingly critical of the Club's dilatory manner in producing guides, and there was a huge demand for up to date information on the latest developments in climbing. To add to the Club's acute embarrassment, a privately funded rock-climbing guide to Borrowdale, the most popular climbing ground in the Lakes at that time, was on sale, co-authored, financed and published by a Club member, Paul Ross. Donald was incensed, and was obliged to talk to Paul who then undertook not to reprint his guide; he was however, invited to join the guidebook sub-committee. Harry Kelly the distinguished Guidebook Editor for over 30 years was then gently persuaded, at the age of 82, to give way to a younger generation. Joe Griffin was appointed, but after 3 years the pressure of work resulted in another change and John Wilkinson took over as Guidebook Editor. It was necessary to get information out to the climbing public as speedily as possible, so to bridge the gap between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Series, the first of a series of New Climbs booklets appeared in 1965 priced 3/6d (17.05p). Compiled by Alan Austin and David Miller, the booklet was well received by the climbing public and, in a short space of time recouped its publication cost. Around this time there was an approach from the Climbers' Club suggesting that the Club should collaborate with them to produce a New Climbs booklet to cover Wales, the Lakes, Southern England and other areas, costs to be shared. Since the Club's contribution to the booklet would be relatively small and the costs high, the committee rejected the proposal. The first of the 4<sup>th</sup> Series of guides, Langdale, compiled by Alan Austin one of the outstanding pioneers of new routes in the Lakes appeared in June 1967. The Langdale guide was followed shortly afterwards by Scafell compiled by Joe Griffin and Geoff. Oliver. The new series had a different format from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Series and each guide had a distinctive coloured plastic covered binding. The series ran to nine volumes, produced over a period of only three years, and involved a vast amount of work by the guide writers and editor. The series was well received by the climbing public and was well reviewed in the climbing magazines and club journals, justifying the optimism and enthusiasm of Donald Murray. Sales were such that the guidebook programme was self-financing, although no profit was made at this stage. Donald Murray had an action packed term in office and was, to many of the Club, the most dynamic and innovative President of the second half-century of the Club.



a President to rank alongside Herbert Cain (1925-1927) as Presidents who got things done!

As a result of a change in format of the guides and a reduction of the series from 8 volumes to 6, the 6<sup>th</sup> Series of guides began to make a profit, and eventually became a major contributor to the Club's finances. Ten per cent of the profit from guidebooks is now donated to appropriate organisations involved with access and conservation: for the year 2004-2005 this amounted to £1,375 which was split equally between the B.M.C. Access Fund and The National Trust Footpaths Fund for the Lakes area. Profits from the guides are taxable and it was suggested that the Club should follow the example of the Scottish Mountaineering Club by creating a Guidebooks Trust, which would not be liable to tax. After due consideration, the committee rejected this proposal and agreed that the Club should retain full control of the guides and pay tax when the guides showed a profit.

Around 1973 an approach was made to the committee by three members who wished to produce a selected climbs guidebook to the Lake District. After due consideration, the Committee decided that the Club's duty was to produce definitive guides and felt it could not support the venture, which went ahead anyway. Published by Constable, "Rock Climbing in the Lake District" by A.G.Cram, J.C. Eilbeck and I. Roper, went on sale in 1975. Twenty-eight years later, the Club finally produced a selected climbs volume, "Lake District Rock", which was well received by the climbing public and considered by climbing press reviewers to be one of the finest guide books ever produced in Britain. It won the guidebook section of the Lakeland Book of the Year Award for 2004.

Back in 1934, the committee announced that they were contemplating the publication of a Fellwalking Guide to the English Lake District. Nothing more was heard of this matter until the project was resurrected thirty years later. In 1996, the guide, *The Lakeland Fells* was finally produced. Edited by Tim Pickles and June Parker with some 38 members involved in legwork on the fells together with 39 photographers and 3 cartographers, the work was completed, although there were some financial problems along the way. Initially the Committee felt unable to support the project and potential losses if the venture failed to break even. However, approaches to members resulted in £25,000 being pledged by subscribers. In addition the Ernest Press offered to put up a third of the capital on a joint publishing basis. At this point the Committee agreed to invest £5000 of the Club's money, the rest to come from private subscribers. There was an initial print run of 10,000 hardback copies including a Special Edition of 350 numbered copies for subscribers. The guide received excellent reviews in the climbing press and broke even financially after a third of the print run had sold.

In addition to guidebooks produced for the Club, members have also written climbing and walking guides to many areas of Britain and abroad for other clubs and for various commercial publishers. The clubs include The Scottish Mountaineering Club, The Climbers' Club, The Alpine Club, The Yorkshire Mountaineering Club, The Northumberland Mountaineering Club, The Federation of Mountaineering Clubs of Ireland, and The British Mountaineering Council.

Ever since the Club was formed in 1906, many members have been able to impart their love of the hills by way of the written word and the visual arts. In particular there has been a substantial contribution to mountain literature, art and photography. In 1981, on the occasion of the Club's 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, an exhibition in the Keswick Moot Hall displayed books written by some of the 76 Club authors responsible for well over 220 books in the Club library. These included books on mountaineering in the Lakes and many other parts of the world, poetry, songs and climbing and walking guide books. Many of these authors were prolific: George Abraham, Frank Smythe, Geoffrey Winthrop Young and Eric Shipton in particular. Some of the books have become mountaineering classics: L.J. Oppenheimer's *The Heart of Lakeland*, Dorothy Pilley's *Climbing Days*, and *The Hill Writings of J.H. Doughty*, to name but a few. Since 1981, members have carried on the tradition and many excellent books and guidebooks have been published. Bob Allen, Bill Birkett, Chris Bonington and John Hunt have all written several books; Harry Griffin has been particularly prolific not only with a dozen books to his name, but as a highly regarded contributor to *The Country Diary in The Guardian* where his well crafted notes on the Lake District appeared every other Monday for 53 years, the last on July 12<sup>th</sup> 2004 a week after his death aged 93. An Honorary Member of the Club, Harry received the M.B.E. for services to journalism. Two weeks after Harry's last contribution, his chosen successor Tony Greenbank, author of several climbing books, presented his first *Country Diary in The Guardian*.

The 1981 Exhibition also displayed mountain paintings and drawings by some 35 members. These included Howard Somervell, Bill Peascod, Jim Riley, Jill Aldersley and the distinguished artist and Honorary Member William Heaton Cooper, whose meticulous drawings of Lakeland crags and coloured frontispieces graced the pages of the Club guidebooks for over 40 years. Since its inception, there have been many talented photographers in the Club: George and Ashley Abraham's mountain photographs are still highly acclaimed. Douglas Milner wrote several books including his classic *Mountain Photography*. W.A. Poucher who, between 1940 when his book *Lakeland Through the Lens* appeared and 1988 when he died aged 96, published over 25 books of photographs.

During the early part of the second half-century, the Club's library, second only to the Alpine Club in size and scope, was housed in the Librarian's home in Ambleside, but thereafter it was not easily accessible to members, since it had no permanent abode. At one stage it was housed in Tony Greenbank's premises in Eskdale Green; then in packing cases. In 1961 it was moved to Kendal where it was located in the new Farmer's Union building and once again books became available to members. In 1966 the Librarian, Muriel Files began negotiations with Lancaster University with a view to permanently housing the Club library within the University Library. Members would have free access, whilst members of the University would have access for reference purposes only. The following Easter, the library moved to Lancaster where it has proved to be an asset to the University and a great convenience for members. In 1999, the extensive collection of books bequeathed to the Club by former President Bobby Files was housed in the Armit Library in St. Martin's College, Ambleside, where it is available to members.

In addition to Club records and other material deposited in the archive room located behind Raw Head Cottage, other important Club documents are available to anyone interested in the development of climbing in the Lakes at the Cumberland Record Office in Kendal. A collection of 750 mountain photographs taken by the Abraham brothers between 1890 and 1934 was presented to the Club by Geoffrey Abraham in 1967. They are lodged for safe keeping at The Abbot Hall Art Gallery and Museum in Kendal where the original glass negatives are undergoing conservation. They are being copied onto C.D. to facilitate easy access. Prints are available to members and the public. The Club has also a considerable collection of mountaineering artefacts, some of which are on display at The National Mountaineering Exhibition at Rheged, Penrith. The Print Museum in Cockermouth also houses printers' blocks from which illustrations from the Club Journal used to be printed. These various collections, together with the Club Library at Lancaster University ensures that Club history and memorabilia are accessible not only to members but also to a wider public.

In June 1987, the Club entered the electronic age with the purchase of an Amstrad computer to control membership and subscriptions. In 1996 Geoff. Cram developed a database for the Club journal, and in 1998 Ron Kenyon produced the Fell and Rock website: <http://www.cumbria.com/frec>. A large amount of Club information is now available on the website including the climbing scene, guide books, recent developments and so on. In the first 18 months the website had several thousand visitors from the U.K. and all over the world. The Club website is an excellent tool to record new routes where it gives up to date detail for a particular area since the production of the last definitive guide-book. An Internet hut booking system (initially for Waters Cottage) is now

available via the members' page of the Club website. It will be possible to check availability and book beds on-line. A Club website co-ordinator has been appointed to work with a commercial web designer to redevelop the site; setting up and editorial control of the site are separated.

In 1996 the combined mountain experiences of some 30 senior members of the Club began to be recorded on tape and an Oral Archivist has carried on the work. The tapes are currently in the custody of Jill Aldersley and are available to members.

### **Some Events and Incidents**

Since the early 1930s when the major British climbing clubs began deliberations regarding the formation of a mountain rescue service, Club members have been heavily involved. In 1933 the Rucksack Club and the Fell and Rock formed a Joint Stretcher Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. C.P. Lepage and included Laurence Pollitt, Eustace Thomas and Wilson Hey. Over the years this committee has undergone several name changes: The First Aid Committee of Mountaineering Clubs, The Mountain Rescue Committee (M.R.C.), The Mountain Rescue Council for England and Wales (Scotland formed its own committee in 1964), and in 2004, Mountain Rescue England and Wales. The Committee's first task was to find a stretcher suitable for mountain rescue, taking into account a stretcher produced in the Lake District by Dr. A. W. Wakefield (President 1923-1925, Hon. Member). A stretcher was designed by Eustace Thomas, a phenomenal walker (Lakeland 24hr. Record 1922), mountaineer (the second climber and first Briton to have climbed all 4000m. peaks in the Alps), and engineer. The stretcher was lightweight, made from duralumin tubing with long extending handles, wooden runners and a double Thomas splint to keep the injured party steady, essential for leg fractures. The Thomas stretcher became standard equipment in the M.R.C.'s rescue posts and in spite of modern competitors, is still in use today with a few modifications.

A leading light in the Committee was Wilson Harold Hey, the distinguished Manchester surgeon who served as its chairman for 16 years until he died in 1956. Wilson was greatly concerned that a casualty's journey off the mountain and on to hospital should be as comfortable and pain-free as possible. To this end he tried, in 1934, to persuade the Home Office to agree to the use of morphia to ease the suffering during rescue of those injured in mountain accidents, the morphia to be administered if necessary, by non-medical people. The Home office refused, so Wilson deliberately flouted the law and from 1935 to 1949 he supplied mountain rescue posts with tubonic ampoules of morphia from his own stocks. These were used in 57 accidents. In August 1949 Wilson again applied to the Home Office, freely admitting that he had been supplying morphia for mountain rescue purposes. On October 26th 1949, he was pros-

ecuted and fined £10 with £10 costs for supplying a prohibited substance. The case was widely and sympathetically reported in the press and the resulting publicity, together with some heavy lobbying of the Home Office by a powerful team which included the presidents of The Alpine Club and the Royal College of Surgeons ably led by Lord Chorley of Kendal ( President 1935 - 1937) was such that Wilson's aims were achieved. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1949, the Home Office agreed to the issue of morphia to mountain rescue posts and to its use in the absence of doctors.

Mountain rescue posts basically equipped with stretchers and rucksacks containing medical and warmth supplies had been established in the Lakes since 1935. However, there was little by way of organised mountain rescue teams, with the exception of the R.A.F. Mountain Rescue Service which began in 1943. Casualties were usually carried off the hill by ad hoc parties of farmers, quarrymen, police and any climbers or walkers who happened to be in the vicinity. The M.R.C. encouraged the formation of mountain rescue teams and many members of the Club were instrumental in the formation and staffing of teams in the Lake District and other areas. In 1946 the Keswick Mountain Rescue Team was founded by Harold (Rusty) Westmorland. He was its President until his death in 1984 aged 98. He was also chairman of the Lakeland Mountain Rescue Panel (later named The Lake District Search and Rescue Association) which provides co-ordination for rescues which might involve several of Lakeland's thirteen teams over a lengthy period. Past President and Hon. Member of the Club which he joined in 1910, Rusty received the O.B.E. in 1964 for services to mountain rescue. He was succeeded as President of the Keswick Team by George Fisher who had led the team for thirty-six years, for which he was awarded the M.B.E.

In Langdale, Sid Cross who arrived at The Old Dungeon Ghyll Hotel in 1950 took on responsibility for organising rescues in the area. Sid's team was a variable body recruited from the hotel staff, guests and drinkers from the bar, including myself on several occasions. The team became more professional when it amalgamated with the Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team in 1970 with Sid as its Hon. President, a post he held for over twenty five years. Sid was also President of the National Search and Rescue Dog Association, Past President and Hon. Member of the Club. Sid received the M.B.E. for services to mountain rescue: he died in 1998 aged 85.

In 1952 Jim Cameron founded the Coniston Mountain Rescue Team, and was one of its first casualties. Between the early 1950s and 1994 when it amalgamated with the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team, The Outward Bound Mountain School Eskdale Team, composed of staff and students was led by successive Principals including Eric Shipton, John Lagoë and Tom Price. In

1963 The Patterdale Mountain Rescue Team was founded by Dr. J.Ogilvie who served as team leader, then chairman and in 1993, President.

The Club's involvement with mountain rescue has been continuous right up to the present time. Peter Smith of the Calder Valley Search and Rescue Team became Secretary of the M.R.C. in 2004. In recognition of outstanding service to mountain rescue, the M.R.C. has, so far, awarded 54 Certificates of Distinguished Service, six of them to members of the Club: Wilson Hey, Rusty Westmorland, Sid Cross, Jim Cameron, George Fisher and Peter Smith.

There has been much to celebrate during the past fifty years of the Club's existence. The opening of the new huts, Boetham Cottage, the Birkness Coach House, Waters Cottage and Karn House were all well attended. The anniversaries of the opening of the older huts were also celebrated with dinners or parties: Brackenclose 21<sup>st</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup>, Raw Head 50<sup>th</sup>, Birkness 50<sup>th</sup> and The Salving House 50<sup>th</sup>. The latter was particularly memorable and merited a large write up in the summer 2003 Chronicle. Organised by the hut warden Roy Buffey, his assistants and helpers, a splendid buffet was laid on for over 60 members in the Rosthwaite village hall. The wine flowed, there were speeches and even a poem composed and read by the President George Watkins. The Club's 50<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> anniversaries were also celebrated by dinners at the Royal Oak Hotel, Keswick. The latter was marked by several innovations. For the first time, a buffet was held in the ballroom to complement the dinner in the Poet's Room, and a disco was held after the speeches. The Club mounted a large exhibition in the Keswick Moot Hall of climbing equipment through the ages, photographs, mountain literature and paintings by Club members. The exhibition subsequently moved to Kendal where it was open to the general public.

There have been several visits to Club huts by parties of climbers from overseas, perhaps the most important being that of Russian climbers. As a result of John Hunt's expedition to the Caucasus in 1958, two years later the Russians visited Britain to be entertained by various clubs. The Russians were met in Langdale by the Wayfarers Club, with a number of our members joining them on Gimmer where they led them up Kipling Groove. The following day, the Russians were accompanied over Esk Hause and Scafell Pike to meet another Fell and Rock contingent in Hollow Stones. Ascents of Central Buttress and Great Eastern by Yellow Slab were followed by tea at Brackenclose and dinner at the Wastwater Hotel, where Vice-President Edward Wormell made a welcoming speech in Russian. By way of reply the Club was presented with a red velvet banner embroidered with gold, which now adorns a wall in Brackenclose.

It is a rare event indeed when the Club Treasurer volunteers to spend money, but the remnant of the 1914-18 War Memorial Fund appeared to be burning a hole in Dick Plint's pocket. When the memorial was completed in 1924, a sum of £55

remained which, by 1957, had grown with interest to £115. It was suggested in committee that the sum be used to provide a memorial to members of the Club who fell in the 1939-45 war. The most suitable memorial was considered to be a new bridge over the river Liza in Ennerdale, which would connect Pillar Rock with the track from Scarth Gap. In conjunction with Cumberland County Council, it was agreed that the Club would contribute one third of the cost of the bridge (to be constructed of pre-stressed concrete), or £210, whichever was the smaller. The actual cost was £197. 4. 8d. plus the cost of a fixing a memorial plaque to the boulder at the north end of the bridge, an operation which took the edge off 24 chisels! The opening ceremony took place on Sunday May 8<sup>th</sup> 1960, and a large gathering assembled. The Presidential party walked from Buttermere via Scarth Gap, others came by Honister and the Haystacks, from Wasdale via the High Level Route to Pillar Rock, and from Borrowdale via Great Gable and the 1914-18 Memorial. As a special gesture, the Forestry Commission allowed cars up the valley from Gillerthwaite to transport members of the Cumberland County Council, the infirm and the idle. The President Harry Spilsbury spoke of the reasons for building the bridge, and Honorary Member John Appleyard unveiled the plaque listing the names of the 13 members who died in the war: the Reverend G.W. Ellison, Vicar of Langdale, conducted a moving service of dedication.

In November 1967 foot and mouth disease arrived in the country, and the Lake District was effectively shut down. This resulted in closure of the huts and the cancelling of all Club meets for three months. The cost to the Club was high with the loss of hut revenues, reduced sales of guide books, and the setting back of the guidebook programme since the writers could not approach the crags to check routes. This situation was repeated with even greater losses 33 years later. In 2000/2001, there were some 660 outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Cumbria and again the Lake District was effectively shut down. This distorted the normal pattern of Club finance resulting in a fall in hut income of £5,400 compared with the previous year. Indeed the balance sheet at the 2001 AGM showed a deficit of £6,346 compared to a surplus of £8,102 the previous year, a loss of £14,448, much of it attributable to the foot and mouth outbreak.

As a result of the attitude of the new management of the O.D.G., the New Year Meets in 1971 and 1972 were held with great success at Raw Head. However many members hankered after a hotel meet in the old style. Sid Cross very kindly offered to scour the District to see if another venue could be found, and eventually had success in booking the Waterhead Hotel for the 1973 New Year Meet. Sid happened to be looking over the manager's shoulder as he entered details of the event in his book and was amused to see that we had, apparently, been transformed into the Felon Rock Climbing Club! Perhaps the manager was not so wide of the mark. Any group the size of the Club will always contain a few miscreants and I don't just mean those individuals who

make off without paying their hut fees or abscond with the cutlery. Over the years, there have been some serious thefts from huts as described previously. Furthermore, it is sad to record that several Club members have served prison sentences for serious crimes. However the dinner at Waterhead went off well with no breaches of the peace, and the Club again reverted to the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.

In March 1972 a bizarre incident occurred which caused a minor spat with one of our fellow clubs. During the early 1970s the Climbers' Club was agonising over the question of admitting women into their club, worried that the character of the club would be fundamentally altered. Views expressed at a C.C. committee meeting were somehow leaked to the press with the result that an article appeared in *The Guardian*, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1972. "Some fear that it (C.C.) might degenerate into something like the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, a mixed organisation which is historically entrenched in the Lake District and includes fell walking amongst its activities." Naturally the article caused offence not only in Fell and Rock circles but also in the Climbers' Club. The President, John Wilkinson telephoned the *Guardian* office where he was passed on to the reporter who wrote the article. A sharp exchange of views occurred when it transpired that the reporter was a member of the Club. The Club Secretary subsequently sent a letter to the reporter asking that he give assurance that no similar article would be written. The affair soon blew over and the customary good relations between our clubs were restored.

In July 1976, three weeks of hot weather with temperatures in the 90s ended the weekend when large numbers of Club members arrived at Pillar Rock to celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ascent. Around 100 ascents of the Rock were made by various routes of all grades. There were climbers in shorts and P.A.s on hard routes and teams of ladies in long skirts and bonnets attacking the Slab and Notch and descending the Old West. Rain put an end to the festivities on the Rock which then transferred to the Wastwater Hotel where a dinner was presided over by President Jack Carswell.

In June 1984, the President Harry Ironfield instigated a meeting between the Club, the Scottish Mountaineering Club, and the Climbers' Club, presidents and club secretaries attending. Over a working dinner, various topics of interest to all the clubs were discussed including the administration of club huts, the production of definitive climbing guides, club handbooks, journals and general finance. There was a profitable exchange of views and it was agreed to hold further meetings biennially. At present, this arrangement has lapsed but it is hoped that it will be revived in the near future. One spin off from the meetings has been that members of the three clubs can buy each other's guidebooks at discounted prices. In the same month there was a special meet held at Brackenclouse, led by former President Donald Murray. On Sunday June 10<sup>th</sup>



1984, on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the unveiling on the summit of Great Gable of the bronze memorial tablet commemorating those members of the Club who fell in the first world war, some 50 members of the Club assembled at the memorial. The President, Harry Ironfield spoke of the great significance of the occasion, and the vision of those early members who conceived the idea of the buying a large tract of the central fells as a war memorial, and committing them to the stewardship of the National Trust. In reply, Lawrence Harwood, regional director of the National Trust said that the whole country had long owed a great debt of gratitude to the Club for its superb gift to the nation.

It has long been recognised that the sport of rock climbing in Britain began with Haskett-Smith's ascent of the Napes Needle in 1886. Fifty years later, organised by the Club, he repeated the ascent before an appreciative audience plastered over the Dress Circle. A special edition of the Club Journal celebrated the event, the Lakeland Number, 1936. On June 28<sup>th</sup> 1986, the Club organised a celebration at Wasdale Head to commemorate the Centenary of the Needle's first ascent. During the previous week, June Parker, with several willing helpers organised a splendid exhibition in the large room above the climbing shop at the Wastwater Hotel, to celebrate 100 years of rock climbing in the Lake District. Over 120 photographs covering the whole period were on display together with a full complement of Club Guidebooks, other books and articles of climbing equipment from the past. The photos ranged from the Central Jordan Climb (D) on Pillar, first ascended by Haskett-Smith in 1892, to Incantations (E6) on the Napes climbed by Pete Whillance in 1984. There were some 22 photos from the Club archives and many from members' collections. There was also a video of the Lakeland Rock films produced by Border T.V., and an early climbing film taken by the Abraham Brothers. Ed. Hammond (non-member), the proprietor of the hotel loaned one of Abraham's original cameras together with its carrying case.

Three life-size dummies dressed in appropriate climbing gear for the years 1886, 1936 and 1986 guarded the entrance to the exhibition. An original watercolour of the Needle by Jill Aldersley was on display: prints were for sale as were models of the Needle in cold cast bronze by the sculptor Clive Barnard (non-member), and new facsimile copies of Haskett-Smith's guides *Climbing in the British Isles*. On the Friday evening, a distinguished group of Club elders including Past Presidents and Dorothy Pilley Richards had dinner in the Wastwater Hotel. The barn above the climbing shop was packed as former President Bobby Files, probable world record holder with 215 ascents of the Needle to his credit made an excellent and amusing speech to declare the exhibition open. The exhibition ran for a week with 3,000 visitors: the Club took £200 in admission fees, and the Wasdale Mountain Rescue Team who staffed

the exhibition for the period raised £400 for the team funds. After Wasdale the exhibition was transferred to Lancaster University for a further three weeks.

The Saturday was a perfect June day, warm and sunny. In the Dress Circle, a large crowd had assembled to watch the President Dave Roberts lead a team of former Presidents Charles Pickles, Peter Moffat and John Wilkinson up the Needle: he greeted each arrival on the summit with a glass of champagne. Derek Walker, President of the Climbers' Club and Trevor Jones former President, followed them. Behind the Wastwater Hotel, a large marquee had been erected and set out with long tables, magnificent decorations and floral displays, where in the evening 120 members and guests sat down to a splendid candlelit celebration dinner. President Dave Roberts introduced the speakers: Charles Pickles, one of several attending who had been present at the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, gave an account of that event. The meet leader, John Wilkinson proposed a toast to Haskett-Smith and Dave Draper (non-member) on behalf of the hotel proposed, in fancy dress, a toast to Wasdale Head, a most amusing speech. The party continued late into the night and even the police who arrived at 1 a.m. were regaled with champagne. On the Sunday, another brilliant day, one member far too young to have climbed in nailed boots was so affected by the event that he borrowed a pair of tricouni nailed boots from the exhibition. He took them for an excursion up Tricouni Slab on Scafell, suitably impressing himself and his second, the meet leader. All in all, the weekend was probably the most splendid social event during the second half-century of the Club. It was rounded off by the publication of a special edition of the Club Journal, hard backed and entitled "100 Years of Rock Climbing in the Lake District", it contained many excellent articles including a complete history of Lakeland climbing.

In October 1986 the Club held its last annual dinner in the Royal Oak Hotel, Keswick, which was destined to become a retail outlet. At the A.G.M. prior to the dinner, an event unique in the Club's history occurred, the election with acclaim of Hilary Moffat, wife of former President Peter Moffat as our first lady President. Despite the fact that ladies made up over a quarter of the Club's membership, it took 80 years to elect our first lady president, although in fairness the presidency had been offered to Katherine Lady Chorley in 1958, but had been declined. The precedent having been set, the second lady President Jill Aldersley was elected eight years later, and, right up to date, Eileen Clark, wife of former President Syd. Clark, was elected in the run up to the Club centenary.

### **The Membership**

For many years now, it has been a matter of great concern that the Club has been unable to recruit substantial numbers of young people. Indeed, by

1980, the membership had declined steadily over the previous 10 years, dropping to its lowest level during the second half century: 866 compared with 892 in 1955. Furthermore, the average age of applicants had increased from 24 in 1955 to 34 over the period 1978 - 82. There was a lack of good climbers amongst the applicants, which in the long term could well have an effect on guide book production. Indeed these fears were realised before the end of the century when the dearth of good climbers in the Club resulted in non-members being recruited for the guide writing teams. In 2000 for the first time in the Club's history, a guidebook was produced, "Borrowdale", written by non-members G.Baum and A.Hewitson. Non-members were also in the team which produced the selected climbs guide *Lakeland Rock* in 2003. As far back as 1968, Jack Soper in his editorial in the *Journal* put his finger on the problem: "the Club as a whole sometimes seems to find it difficult to accept that the young climber, narrowly motivated though he may be at first, is the life blood of the Club". Indeed fears were expressed both in Committee and throughout the Club at large that if we did not address the problem of the Club's image in general mountaineering circles, where we were often seen to present an aloof, elderly, and snooty image, a Club difficult to join, we might well degenerate into a geriatric rambling club.

A Youth Policy sub-committee was set up with a remit to arrest and reverse the trend to an increasing average age in both membership and applications for membership. This eventually resulted in an amendment to Club Rule 9 so that 16-year-olds could be registered with the Membership Secretary as Youth Graduates. They could then accumulate meets and experience with a view to becoming Associate Members at 18, no subscription being paid until then; Associate Members under 25 would pay half the standard subscription. Furthermore experience gained as a Youth Graduate could count towards earlier application for full membership. Ways were considered to attract young members: these included advertising the Club in climbing magazines, at climbing walls, and in sports shops, arranging more prospective members meets, joint meets with University clubs and putting details of the procedure for joining the Club on the website. These efforts have not, as yet, resulted in a sea change: in the years between 2000 and 2005 only four youngsters enrolled as Youth Graduates, three of whom became Associate Members. However the membership has increased steadily over the past 20 years, rising to 1,160 in 2005, although the average age of applicants has risen to 45. Still below the limit of 1,300 members, the Club is now slightly smaller in size than the Alpine Club, since it incorporated the Alpine Climbing Group and the Ladies Alpine Club.

Since the earliest days of the Club, members have introduced their children to the fells and crags with the result that some of those who have not been

put off mountains for good by over enthusiastic parents, elect to join the Club and there are currently fourth generation members. This has been greatly encouraged by the increased accommodation in the cottages, and by family meets in the main huts: it could, in time help redress the problem of an ageing membership. Over the years the membership of women in the Club has risen steadily: 22.2% in 1942, 26.5% in 1962 and 28.5% in 2005. The trend to an older club is due, at least in part, to the demographic situation in the country as a whole. The 2002 census revealed that pensioners now outnumber teenagers and that 21% of the population is now aged 60 and above, a figure calculated to double by 2030. In 2005 over half the members of the Club were aged 60 and above; 1.2% under 30, and 7% under 40. The problem with an ageing membership is not solely confined to the Fell and Rock and other major clubs are having similar problems attracting the younger climber. This may be due to a more affluent car owning society where day visits to the Lakes have replaced longer trips. Furthermore, in the case of climbers, many now prefer the different challenge of steep bolted limestone to land rock, a probable legacy of training on climbing walls. Indeed many Lakeland crags are reverting to the vegetated state they were in before they were developed, due to the lack of ascents. It seems likely that the age profile of the Club has swung permanently in the direction of the elderly. Furthermore, it is significant that a substantial number of candidates for membership, many with years of experience walking and climbing only appear to want to join the Club when middle aged. What is it about the Club that attracts them at this age and not when they were in their youth? Perhaps it is the Club's well-organised social life, with an abundance of huts, meets, parties and so on.

As the Club has increased both in numbers and in hut properties, so has the workload of the Club officers. It is an indication of this when the duties of the Club Secretary in 1955 are now shared between 7 officers: the Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Membership Secretary, Dinner Secretary, Guide Books Secretary, Obituary collator and Archivist. Lyna Kellett (later Pickering) certainly held down a big job as Secretary in 1948–58. The sub-division of officers' duties and the creation of new officers resulted in a large growth in the Committee. In 1955 the Club was run by 13 officers and 12 elected members. Currently there are 22 officers with another 6 not on the main committee, although the number of elected members 12, remains the same. In case officers enjoy their work too much there is a limit of 10 years on their tenure. The active membership of the Club is estimated to be only around 300; of these some 80 are already involved to some degree in work for the Club as officers, hut wardens, assistant hut wardens, members of the guide books team and those involved with The British Mountaineering Council. Thus over a quarter of the active membership are currently staffing the Club. Staffing is

already a problem, which would be exacerbated if the Club ever acquired further huts.

### **On Fell, Rock and Ice**

The Bob Graham Round, first established in 1932 has long been considered a well trodden challenge for fell runners; a circuit of 72 miles traversing 42 specified Lakeland tops with 27,000 feet of ascent to be made in 24 hours. Over 500, including a substantial number of Club members have completed the circuit, mainly in mid-summer. However on December 22<sup>nd</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> 1986, Steve Parr completed the round in 23hr. 26min, the second fastest winter round. A considerable extension of the round was made on June 24-25<sup>th</sup> 1961 when Ken Heaton, who ended a distinguished rock-climbing career in the mid 1950s in order to take up fell running, made a round of 51 Lakeland tops covering 82 miles with 31,000 feet of ascent in under 24 hours. On July 28-29<sup>th</sup> 1984, Steve Parr extended the round even further with a continuous run over all 61 Lakeland summits of 2,500 ft and above, covering 116 miles and 42,550 ft of ascent in 43hrs 1min 40sec, a remarkable feat of endurance, which may well stand as a record today.

Lesser mortals have had to make do with Munro bagging and many members of the Club have done them all. In Skye, in 1959, John A. Hartley set a new record for the traverse of the Black Cuillin Ridge, including Sgurr Alasdair, which stood until 1967. His time of 5hr. 50min. reduced the previous record by about 1hr. 30mins. and was made in mountain boots without the assistance of supporting parties. All the long distance walks in Britain have been done by numerous members, as have many of the great classics abroad: the Tour of Mont Blanc, the Tour of Monte Rosa, many of the French G.R.s and much mountain walking in the Alps, the Andes, Himalaya, New Zealand and other mountain ranges.

The ascent of Central Buttress on Scafell in 1914 together with the Bayonet-shaped Crack variation climbed in 1932 established a standard of rock climbing in the Lakes which remained virtually static until 1949. In that year Jim Birkett (non-member) climbed Harlot Face on Castle Rock of Triermain and Ken Heaton led a new start to Do Not in White Ghyll, thereby establishing the Extremely Severe (5b) grade in the Lakes. By 1955 some fourteen E grade routes had been climbed, four of them by Arthur Dolphin. However, when Bill Peascod departed for Australia in 1952 and Dolphin was killed in the Alps in 1953, the Club went through a lean time as regards exploration of new routes in the Lakes. In that excellent summer of 1955 some 30 new routes were recorded, only one of which, a severe, was put up by a Club member. Howard Somervell in his presidential speech at the Club's Jubilee Dinner in 1956 noted this point with great concern. Indeed it was only towards the end of the decade

that an influx of new blood into the Club corrected the situation. There is no doubt that the stimulation provided by the new teams of talented guide writers and their helpers were the prime motivation for the renaissance. The remarkably good summer of 1959 yielded some 70 new routes when, in contrast to the previous decade, fourteen Club members took an active part. From then until the present time, Club members, often from the guide writing teams, have made a major contribution to exploration in the Lakes where the number of Extremely Severe routes has risen almost exponentially, with around 2000 E grade routes recorded and a corresponding increase in standards up to E10 (7a). Outstanding amongst the pioneers of the earlier period were Paul Ross and Alan Austin, each of whom recorded over forty new routes in Borrowdale and Langdale respectively. More recently Pete Whillance, Al Phizacklea and Dave Birkett have all made a huge contribution.

Over the whole half-century, members of the Club have climbed extensively abroad. From the Alps to the Andes, the Hindu Kush to the Himalaya, Kenya to the Karakoram, Patagonia to the Pamirs, Spitsbergen to South Georgia and Yukon to Yosemite there are few mountain ranges, which have remained unvisited by Club members. From 1955 until the present time there have been so many notable ascents in the greater mountain ranges that lack of space prevents recording many of them.

In the Alps, all the major north faces have been climbed and several members have ascended all the 4,000m peaks. Some outstanding climbs include:-

1958 The sixth ascent of the S.W.Pillar of the Dru by Paul Ross.

1959 Despite a season of mixed weather, several members did some great climbs:

W.Face of the Dru by Geoff Oliver:

N. Face of the Aiguille du Plan by Gunn Clark and Terry Sullivan;

The Walker Spur of the N.Face of the Grands Jorasses by Gunn Clark and Robin Smith (S.M.C.), the first British ascent;

The Direttissima on the N. Face of the Cime Grande di Lavaredo and the Cassin Route on the Cima Ovest by Gunn Clark. (Sadly Gunn died in an avalanche on Buachaille Etive Mor some twelve years later).

1961 E.Face of the Grand Capucin by Terry Sullivan and Jeff Allison;

N.E. Face of the Piz Badile by John A. Hartley and Rod Brown.

1962 W.Face of the Aiguille Noire du Peuterey (Ratti-Vitali Route) by John A. Hartley and Rod Brown.

N. Face of the Dru by Geoff Oliver and Dave Roberts in separate parties.

1964 The complete traverse of the Chamonix Aiguilles from the Charmoz to the Plan over four days by John A. Hartley and Rod Brown.

S. Face of the Punta Gugliermine of the Aiguille Blanche by the same party.

1965 The Central Spur of the N.Face of Aiguille du Midi (3<sup>rd</sup> ascent) by Paul

Nunn and Oliver Woolcock.

The S. Face of the Meije (Allain Route) by John A. Hartley and Rod Brown.  
1966 N. Face of the Chaifron by John Cheesmond and Kim Meldrum (1<sup>st</sup> British ascent).

1975 N. Face of the Eiger (Lauer Route) in a storm;

N.N.W. Face of the Zermatt Breithorn (1<sup>st</sup> British ascent of the Welzenbach Route)

W. Face of the Grand Charmoz (Cordier Pillar), all by Dave Robbins.

1977 N. Face Direct of the Sassolungo (1<sup>st</sup> winter ascent, in six and a half days at -30C).

N. Face of the Schreckhorn and the N. Face of the Ochs (1<sup>st</sup> British ascents) all by Steve Parr.

1979 Aiguille d'Argentière (Bettenburg Route, 1<sup>st</sup> British ascent)

The Frêne Face of Mt. Blanc (The Bonatti Direct, 4<sup>th</sup> ascent, 1<sup>st</sup> British).

N. Face of the Triolet climbed solo. All by Steve Parr.

1984 N. Face of the Eiger by Bob Tresidder.

1989 Peuterey Ridge Integral of Mt. Blanc climbed solo by Steve Parr in four days. (Steve Parr's brilliant climbing career came to an end in 1991 when he disappeared in the Himalaya.

From the mid 1970s until the present time many members have been active on the great crags of Central Switzerland in the vicinity of the Grimsel Pass, and various crags in other regions of the Alps.

From the earliest days of the Club, members have been active in the Himalaya. Between 1921 and 1953, 15 members participated in 9 British Everest Expeditions: John Hunt (leader) and Alf Gregory were on the successful 1953 expedition. In 1985, fulfilling the dream of former President Howard Somervell (Everest 1922 and 1924) that someday a Club member would climb Everest, Chris Bonington stood on the summit, just three months after he joined the Club. A member of the Norwegian expedition which put 17 climbers on the summit, Chris was for a short time, the oldest climber at 50, to reach the top. Since then Chris has taken part in expeditions virtually every year, mainly enjoying mid-height peaks. Another of the Club's Honorary Members, John Jackson participated in expeditions and treks for almost 60 years: he was a member of the successful 1955 Kangchenjunga Expedition, the 3<sup>rd</sup> expedition in which members took part. John died in 2005 aged 84 shortly after attending the Kangchenjunga Reunion at the P.Y.G. Hotel. For most years since 1955 members have climbed and trekked in the Himalaya, Karakoram and Pamirs where there have been triumphs, failures and tragedies in almost equal measure.

1956 Macha Puchra. J.O.M. Roberts led the successful expedition.

1957 Disteghil Sar, Karakoram. Alf Gregory led the expedition, which retreated at 21,00ft.in bad weather.

Jugal Himalaya. Crosby Fox (leader) and George Spenceley were on the unsuccessful Y.R.C. Expedition during which Crosby died in an avalanche. 1958 Fluted Peak 21,135ft. Jos Lynham was on the successful Sherbourne Expedition to Spiti.

Ama Dablam. Alf Gregory (leader) and Dick Cook were members of the Anglo-Italian Expedition which retreated at 20,000ft. due to insuperable difficulties.

1959 Batura Mustagh, Karakoram. Harry Stephenson and Dick Knight together with three companions disappeared without trace, probably avalanched.

1960 Annapurna II, 26,041ft. climbed by a joint British, Indian and Nepalese Army Expedition led by J.O.M. Roberts.

1961 Shigri Parbat 21,800 ft. Jos Lynham was on the successful Bara Shigri Expedition to Kulu.

1962 Pamirs. John Hunt led the British-Soviet Expedition making four major ascents and the first ascent of Peak Concord 5,640m Kanjiroba Himal.

Nancy Smith was on the Pinnacle Club Expedition to W.Nepal and climbed an unnamed peak 21,135ft

1975 Puperash, Pakistan climbed by Dave Robbins.

1976 Changabang 6,864m. Syd. Clark and Jim Duff were in the successful party which climbed a new route between the S. Buttress and the original 1974 route.

1977 Latok II, Karakoram. Pat Fearnhough and Paul Nunn were members of the unsuccessful Sheffield Expedition which retreated at 21,800 ft. and during which the leader died.

1978 Latok II. Pat Fearnhough was killed in the Braldu Gorge on the approach march.

Shinguk Zom, Hindu Kush. Steve Parr was defeated by bad weather.

1979 Kusum Kangum, Charpati Himal. Peter Fleming, Ian Angel and Peter Moffat retreated in bad weather.

1981 Bethartoli Himal S. 6,315m. Garhwal climbed by the Gorphwysfa Expedition led by John Jackson.

1986 Shim-Shal Weisshorn. Karakoram climbed by Dave Robbins who was killed on the descent when an abseil anchor failed.

1987 Kharka Kund 6,612m. Garhwal climbed by Bob Beadle.

1992 Panch Chuli II 6,904m. Climbed by an Indo-British Expedition led by Chris Bonington.

1996 Haramosh II 6,666m. Karakoram. Dave Wilkinson led the successful expedition in which all five members of the team reached the summit, but Paul Nunn and his companion died in an avalanche on the descent.

1999 Bolocho, Karakoram. Dave Wilkinson's Expedition climbed Bolocho I, 6,000m; Bolocho V 5,240m; and Bolocho VI 5,260m.



2000 Sekha Brakh (Dragonfly Peak) 5,450m Karakoram climbed by Dave Wilkinson and Paul Hudson.

2001 Solu glacier, Karakoram. Ice Cream Peak 6,189m Climbed by Dave Wilkinson.

Island Peak 6,189m Nepal climbed by John M. Moore.

2002 Annapurna 8,091m climbed by Alan Hinks. His attempt on Kangchenjunga was unsuccessful.

Pokharken 6,350m Nepal. South face climbed by David Wynne-Jones.

2003 Kangchenjunga. Alan Hinks' second attempt was also unsuccessful.

2004 Dhaulagiri 8,167m climbed by Alan Hinks..

Eastern Pamirs, Zaalayskiy Range. Paul Hudson, Ken Finlay and Susan Jensen were members of a Leeds Expedition. Some ten peaks of around 5,000m were climbed.

2005 Kangchenjunga 8,586m Climbed by Alan Hinks, the thirteenth climber and 1<sup>st</sup> Briton to have ascended all fourteen 8,000m Peaks, a remarkable achievement. He was elected Honorary Member of the Club.

There are many other outstanding ascents of high mountain peaks by members. In 1957 Simon Clark and Kim Meldrum were members of the Cambridge University Andean Expedition which climbed a previously unclimbed peak, Pumasillo 20,490ft in the Peruvian Cordillera Vilcabamba. Three years later Kim led the successful Oxford Andean Expedition, which climbed several peaks in the Cordillera Carabaya, notably Allinccapac 19200ft. In 1997 in the Cordillera Central, Paul Hudson led a party of five members who climbed Nevado Padrecaca 5362m and Tiella 5897m by the S.W. ridge. In 2004 Dave Wilkinson was a member of a four-man Anglo Scottish Expedition to the Vilcanota Range, Peru, where first ascents were of Nevado Ichu Ananta 5,720m by the South flank/East ridge, Ninaparaco 5,930m by the North face and Jatunhuma North East 5930m by the North face. In 1976 in Africa, Tony Charlton climbed all the routes to the summit of Mt. Kenya.

Ski mountaineering and ski touring have always been popular with members and some notable trips have been made in the Alps, the Urals, Canadian Rockies, Spitsbergen, Greenland and Antarctica. Between 1955 and 1963 some seven members served with the Falkland Islands Dependencies' Survey during which various peaks in Antarctica and South Georgia were climbed in addition to some prodigious ski and sledge trips. Bob Lewis made first ascents of Mt. Shackleton 4,500ft, Mt. Scott, 3,000ft and Mt. Balch 3,900 ft, all in the Argentine Islands region of Grahamland.

Since the early 1950s, when several members visited N.E. Greenland on geological expeditions, the Staunings area has been very popular. In 1960 John Hunt's expedition which included John Jackson, made first ascents of Tintagel, Beaumaris Spitze, and Karabiner Peak, and the first crossing on skis of the N.

Staunings. In 1963, Robin Hildrew and Dick Morton were members of the Cambridge University Staunings Expedition which climbed some twenty-eight new peaks. In 1965 Roger Tuft was a member of a small party which made the first east-west crossing of the polar ice cap since Nansen in 1888. Taking a more northerly route than Nansen, the 400-mile journey from Angmagssalik to the Sondre Stromfjord was made on skis, man-hauling sledges, in 39 days. More recent expeditions include Dave Wilkinson's Kangerdlugssaq Expedition of 1998 which climbed thirty new peaks of around 2,500 m, and that of 2001 to the N. and S. Lemon Mountains where some 18 new peaks were climbed including the N.E. face of the Spear. In East Greenland in 2003, Brian Davison led an eight-man expedition including Dave Wilkinson to the Southern Kangerdlugssaq where thirty-five peaks were climbed. In the Staunings Steve Reid led a four-man party which made first ascents of the South West Ridge and the South Ridge of Dansketinde 2.

The big rock walls of the Verdon Gorge, Baffin Island and in particular Yosemite have all received attention from members. In 1972 Paul Ross climbed Salathe Wall; in 1975 Geoff Lamb did Sentinel and Middle Cathedral N. Face; in 1978 John Fleming climbed five big walls, three of them on El Capitan including the first British ascent of The Shield, a seven-day route. In 1980 Syd Clark climbed The Nose of El Capitan, a four-day epic with snowstorms and earthquakes. Many other members have climbed extensively in the area.

Mountain activity, whether it is fell walking, rock climbing, skiing, or high mountain climbing, has always been attended by a degree of risk. During the second half-century, 20 Club members have died in mountain accidents compared with 24 in the first half. Several others have also died from heart attacks whilst in the mountains, notably Vice-President Bill Peascod who died in 1985 aged 65 whilst seconding Great Slab on Clogwyn d'ur Arddu. Accomplished rock climber, artist, author and Vice-President of the B.M.C., Bill was in line to become the next President of the Club. However, the pattern of mountain accidents has changed over the years. In the first half-century, there were 13 rock climbing deaths in Britain of Club members whereas in the second half-century only 3, one of which was an abseiling accident and another due to a fall whilst solo climbing. The difference can be largely attributed to the greatly improved safety equipment used in the second half-century. So far as accidents abroad are concerned, a more affluent society together with greater possibilities for foreign travel reversed the trend. In the first half-century, there were 5 deaths abroad, none in the Himalaya. In the second half-century there were 15; of these 5 were in the Karakoram and 2 in the Himalaya, mainly due to avalanches. These included two former guidebook writers, Pat Fearnough, and Paul Nunn. The risks entailed in high mountain climbing have not decreased

with time, and the objective dangers posed by avalanches, rock falls, bad weather, cold, high altitude and dangerous river crossings are ever present.

Despite the fact that the age profile of the club has increased substantially during the second half-century, one surprising feature is the increased activity and ability of older members. For a variety of reasons more members are now taking early retirement from work, and make the most of it on the hills, the crags and with extended trips abroad, treks in the Himalaya, the Andes and so on. Many older members now winter abroad particularly in Spain where the mountains of the Costa Blanca provide superb walking and an abundance of easily accessible crags. It is remarkable that many climbers, often with over 40 years experience of continuous mountain activity behind them, are still climbing hard, in some cases just as hard as they did in their youth. It would appear that the often-quoted adage that "there are old climbers and bold climbers, but no old bold climbers" is no longer valid. In the article in the 1981 Journal concerned with risk, "and now for the bad news", I wrote "It is seldom that we see anyone on the crags of pensionable age". What may have been true then is certainly not the case today and there are many pensioners still climbing well. I can only attribute this to the increased fitness resulting from regular practice on climbing walls, more opportunity for frequent holidays, and to the greatly improved safety on climbs provided by the use of modern equipment.

### Extra Time

As the centenary of the Club approaches, there is much to look back on with satisfaction, not only over the past 50 years, but also over the whole life of the Club which has been fortunate in having many astute, dedicated and hardworking officers and committee members, who have steered it to its present position as one of the country's major climbing clubs.

This is the Club which, under the leadership of that inspired President Herbert Cain bought a large tract of the central fells as a monument to those members who died in the first world war and presented it in 1924 to the National Trust. This act undoubtedly gave a tremendous boost to the National Park movement, and was one of the most important events in the Club's history.

This is the Club which produced the first definitive rock-climbing guide books, where Harry Kelly devised the format of a pocket-sized book with the pitch-by-pitch description of climbs now used by virtually all British guide books. Despite a bleak period in the 1950s and 60s when the guidebook programme was virtually moribund and deeply in debt to the Club, the wisdom and sheer enthusiasm of the President Donald Murray restored the situation. The guides have since gone from strength to strength, with an eighth series nearing completion; *Lakeland Rock*, a splendid selected climbs guide, and a well re-

ceived walking guide *The Lakeland Fells*. All are making a substantial contribution to the Club's finances, with 10% of profits donated to organisations involved with access and conservation.

This is the Club whose involvement in mountain rescue ranks alongside guide book production and the donation of the central fells to the National Trust as major contributions for the benefit of the mountaineering public in general.

This is the Club which used its surplus funds, together with generous gifts and interest-free loans from members, to create the only purpose-built hut in the Lakes, Brackenclough, opened in 1937. Following the Council for the Preservation of Rural England's ruling that any future huts should be developed from existing property, the Club acquired a further three huts in the Lakes over the following 16 years. During the second half century hut expansion continued with further huts in the Lakes and Scotland, providing members with more hut accommodation than any other club in Britain.

This is the Club whose members throughout the century have made a major contribution to the exploration and development of rock climbing in the Lake District and to mountain literature, art and photography. Currently, despite an apparently inexorable trend to an ageing membership, there is still great activity on the fells, the crags and in high mountain ranges world-wide. It is to be hoped that the measures devised by the Committee to encourage young people to join the Club will, in time, reverse this trend.

The Club has, therefore, fulfilled the purpose for which it was formed, in promoting good fellowship amongst its members, by providing them with the means necessary to pursue their interests in walking and climbing, helping preserve the sanctity of the Lake District, and by guarding the interests of mountaineers in general. The Club will move into its second century with confidence, and in the words of Edward Scantlebury, co-founder of the Club, "It will last as long as there are hills in the Lake District".

## THE CLUB HUTS

### A Chronology

*Maureen Linton*

For the first thirty years of its existence, the Club had no huts of its own and Meets were centred on hotels in various Lakeland valleys. At the end of the First World War, the idea of establishing a hut as a war memorial was considered, but this was not followed up. During the following years other Clubs started to acquire huts and by the end of the 1920s we were the only senior Club without its own property. There was also a growing concern that the cost of hotel or other accommodation on meets was a deterrent to potential, especially young, applicants for membership. So the search for a Hut began.

At first a property for conversion was sought but, when nothing suitable was found, a decision was made to buy land and have a purpose-built Hut erected. A outline from the start of the main events in the story of the Huts is as follows:

- Nov. 1935    Brackenclose Wood purchased for £150.
- Easter 1936    Work began on building the Hut. Funds raised by donations and loans
- Oct. 1936    Official opening of Brackenclose. Total cost £2,337. Primus stoves and oil lamps for cooking and lighting, no electricity, cold showers only.
- May 1944    A 20 year lease was agreed on the farmhouse at Raw Head at a rent of £65 per quarter
- Oct. 1944    Official opening of Raw Head Cottage.
- Late 1946    Purchase of the complete Raw Head property – cottage, barn and outhouses for £1800. Conversion of the Barn began.
- April 1950    Official opening of Raw Head Barn. Total cost £5,712
- May 1951    Purchase completed of the stables, barn and cottage on the Hassness estate for £2,500. Conversion work began.
- June 1952    Official opening of Birkness. Total cost £5,393  
Purchase of cottage known as The Salving House at a cost of £1,000

June 1953 Official opening of the Salving House. Total cost £1,932 .

The Treasurer announced that Club funds would not permit the purchase of any further property "for the foreseeable future".

1957 Electricity installed at Raw Head.

1958 Electricity installed at Salving House.

1962 Electricity installed at Birkness.

Oct 1964 Purchase of cottage at Brotherswater from the Bentley Beetham legacy at a cost of £3,500

Oct 1965 Official opening of Beetham Cottage. Total cost £6,464.

July 1977 Electricity at last to Brackenclose.

June 1980 New kitchen at Salving House officially opened.

Easter 1987 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of Brackenclose.

June 1989 Purchase of the Old Police Station at Kinlochleven from the legacy of G.C.Waters at a cost of £40,350. Conversion work began.

May 1990 Official opening of Waters Cottage. Total cost £49,685.

Nov.1993 Official opening of the Coach House at Birkness.

Oct.1994 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Raw Head Cottage.

Oct.2000 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Raw Head Barn

2001 Purchase of Kam House from the Campbell-Bruce/Hyde Parker legacy at a cost of £128,411.

June 2002 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Birkness

Sept 2002 Official opening of Kam House.

June 2003 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Salving House.

These notes show merely the landmarks in the history of our Huts, but for 70 years work has been ongoing continuously in the development and improvement of our properties. It is thanks to the hard and devoted work of all past and present Hut Secretaries, Hut Wardens and generations of members who have given of their time, skill and labour that we have the splendid facilities which we enjoy today.

### Editors' Note

Maureen Linton has researched and written a full and detailed history of the Huts up to the Club's Centenary. Inevitably the material covered ground included in John Wilkinson's review of the second fifty years of the Club – 'The Second Half', and also it proved too long for inclusion in this Journal. However Members should be aware of Maureen's scrutiny and scrupulous recording with huge amounts of facts and figures now concentrated together. Arrangements are being made for information to be available via the Club's archives and library.



## A HISTORY OF LAKE DISTRICT CLIMBING

Alan Phizacklea

### Part 5

#### 1986 – 2005

The last twenty years have seen a progressive rise in grades across the Lake District, and it is encouraging to note that the majority of climbers who are currently pushing the limits are home grown Cumbrian lads.

The names of local lads Paul Cornforth, Dave Birkett, Andy Hyslop, Alan Wilson and James McHaffie have been constantly in the news, whilst those of once regular visitors Martin Berzins, Dave Pegg and Paul Ingham are no longer heard. Virtually every crag in the Lakes has seen some sort of development; and in particular Dow Crag, East Buttress, The Napes, Eagle Crag and Dove Crag have seen considerable advances in grades. The last twenty years have not just been about increasing standards, there have been hundreds of VS to E2 lines discovered which will satisfy the majority of active climbers today.

The use of bolt protection in the quarries, the steep southern limestone and the St Bees cliffs has not spread to the "proper" crags. Apart from one brief incident, standards have risen on the natural crags without resorting to bolts for protection; the boldness of our top climbers becomes yet more astonishing. Down at the other end of the climbing spectrum, the once genteel art of bouldering has now developed into an intensely competitive scene, with groups of youths carrying their mats like furtive refugees across remote hillsides in search of "The Stone".

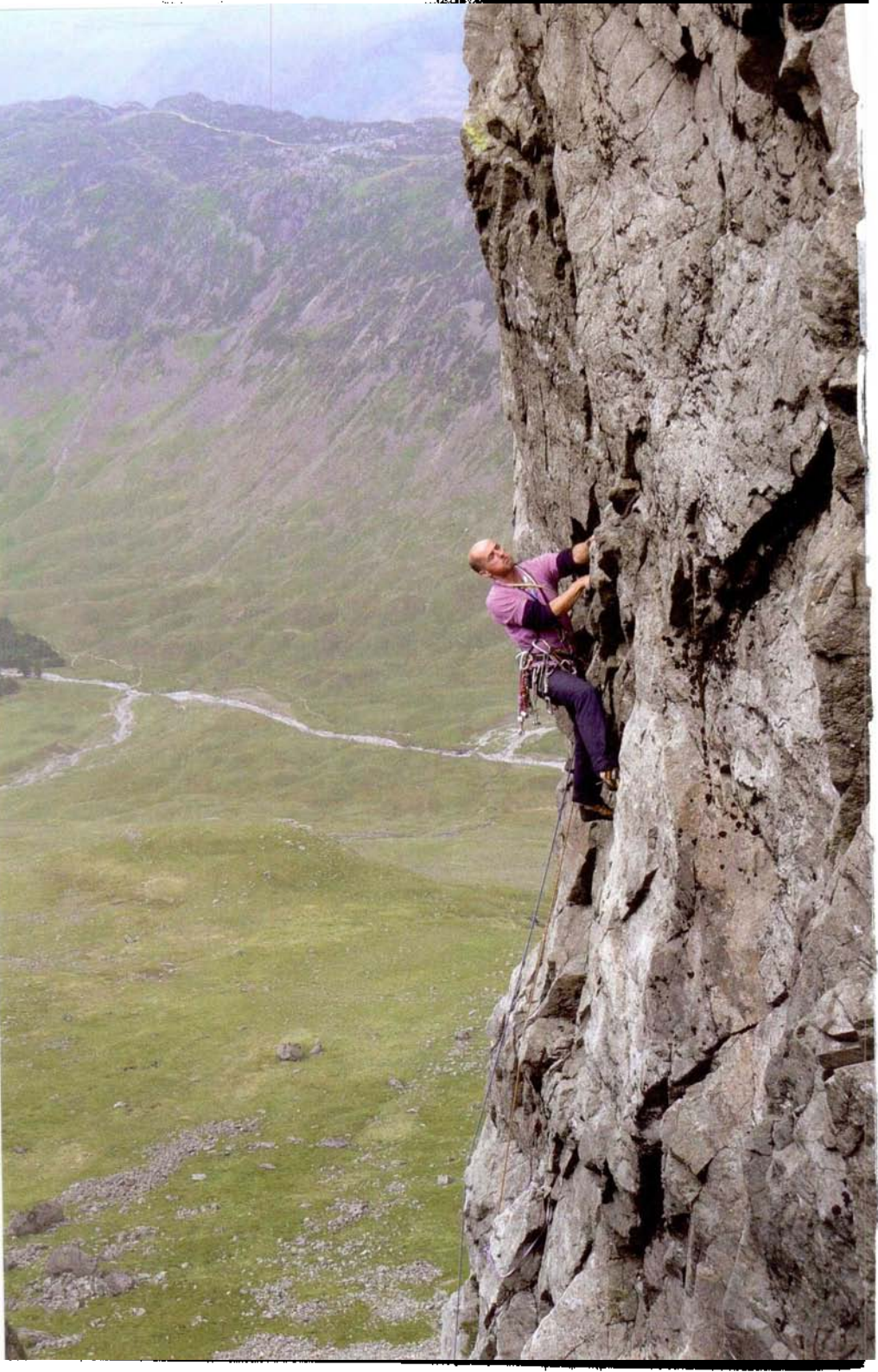
The last review of Lake District climbing was published in the 1986 journal, a special edition to celebrate the centenary of the ascent of Napes Needle. It was said twenty years ago that there were very few good lines left for future climbers, the following article proves that those prophets were so, so wrong.

#### 1986 to 1991 – The hectic years

Where better to start this historical section than up on the East Buttress of Scafell, where Chris Sowden and Martin Berzins added *Borderline*, which takes an audacious line up the overhanging wall right of *Ichabod*. Originally given E6, this was a significant leap in standard on this crag, and the Lakes; as it was the hardest route on any of the mountain crags. However, the flawed nature of the first ascent hid the fact that this route is actually E7 when climbed cleanly, but despite many attempts, this wasn't achieved for another 14 years.

Paul Ingham was making his name around the Lakes at this time, his contributions such as *Pretty in Pink* (E6) at Deer Biell, *Geronimo* (E6), on Shep-





herds and *A Breach of the Peace*, (E6), *Grievous Bodily Arm* (E6) and *Remission* (E6) all on Reecastle Crag illustrate his abilities on short, technically desperate problems. (The latter two routes have subsequently been upgraded to E7: at the time, there was a reluctance to use the E7 grade). There were a few lines added to the higher crags, such as Colin Downer's classic *Snickers Snack* (E3) on Gable Crag, and *Internal Combustion* (E6) on Raven, Threshthwaite by the North-Eastern raiders Bob Smith and John Earl. Buttermere saw some interesting additions, Stephen Reid added *A Wing and a Prayer* and *The Shape of Things to Come* (both E3) on Eagle Crag, whilst Colin Downer was spearheading the development of the wall left of High Crag. Stephen Reid and Ian Clarke also cleaned and developed Moss Crag, on the lower slopes of Fleetwith Pike.

Elsewhere, the sound of the drill broke the silence of the quarries, where Paul Carling placed three bolts at Hodge Close to produce an instantly popular E4 called *Limited Edition*. The majority of the locals expected to see these bolts chopped, thus upholding the bold traditions of earlier pioneers of this quarry such as Pete Whillance. However, John Daly, Dave Geere and Keith Phizacklea stepped in and started to add their own bolts to various local quarries, thus sparking off a major new routing spree on slate around Tilberthwaite and Coniston. This continued for several years and produced some excellent routes such as *Wicked Willie*, *First Night Nerves*, *Creative Contortions*, and *Fatal Attraction*. The first bolts introduced to Chapel Head Scar sparked off a similar frenzy of development of South Cumbrian limestone. The main protagonists were a closely knit group consisting of Paul Cornforth, Paul Ingham, Jim Bird and others. Chapel Head gradually matured into one of the premier limestone crags in the country, and provides a valuable wet weather retreat from the mountains.

Another team prolific in the arts of new routing was Tom Walkington, Dave Bates and Barry Rogers. They built up a reputation in the mid-eighties by developing many of the shorter crags, such as Scar Lathing and Long Crag in Eskdale, Far West Raven Crag in Langdale, and Iving Scar in Kentmere. Their best additions were on Black Crag near to Wrynose Pass, which has subsequently become one of the most popular small crag venues in the Lakes.

The promise of a new guidebook has always encouraged the last minute sweep of the remaining unclimbed lines in the area. Typical was the Eastern Crags guide, written by the North-Eastern team of Bob Smith and John Earl. They climbed several lines on the long-ignored Buckbarrow in Longsleddale, including *Soup Dragon* (E4), and on Iron Crag in Thirlmere they added *Quest* at E5. The steep lower wall of this crag gave the line of *Western Union* (E6) to Douggie Hall, who had reputedly stopped off there on his way to his brother's

wedding! Whether or not this is true, the tale has subsequently grown in local folklore, where the latest version has him leading the route in top hat and tails!

I will start the 1987 report in Easedale, where John White, "Wilf" Williamson and Andy Tilney scrubbed up Blea Crag. This is a familiar tale, the crag becoming popular for a while as the locals paid a visit, but sadly, there was insufficient quality there to attract enough climbers to keep the moss at bay. This team also cleaned up the right wing of Raven Crag at Walthwaite, where the proximity to the road has ensured its upkeep.

The main Borrowdale action of this year was from Andy Jones, who added two difficult lines to the neglected walls of Long Band Crag with *The Apprentice* (E4) and *The Mastercraftsman* at E5.

Across in the West, the final stage of the Buckbarrow development was drawing to a close, where Dave Hinton, Joe Wilson and Keith Phizacklea all added many lines, but the hardest route came from a raid by Berzins and Sowden, when they snatched their *Torch Song Trilogy* at E5. Upon The Napes, things were stirring when Pete Long and Terry Parker created a delightful variation to *Crinkler's Cracks* (which had suffered a serious rockfall) to establish *Amos Moses* (E1). Just around the corner, Al Phizacklea towed Tony Greenbank up a blank slab, which caused his long suffering second to utter "There he is, grinning at me, my *Tormentor!*", which gave the name to the route at E4.

1988 was a productive year for many new-routing teams across the Lakes. Martin Berzins and Neil Foster added the awesome *Bucket City* (E6) on Dove Crag, the first route to breach the steep North Wall since Rick Graham and Bill Birkett climbed *Fast and Furious* in 1982.

Paul Ingham added the desperate *Inferno* (E7) to Hell's Wall in Borrowdale, the first route in the Lakes to be given the tentative seventh grade. Further down the valley, Paul Ross, returning to the area after 22 years in the wilderness that some call the USA, linked up with Denis Byrne-Peare to create *The Prodigal Son* at E3. Even after such a long absence from the area, the name of Ross still courted controversy, following some mischievous rumours claiming that the ascent was flawed.

The old favourite venue of Pillar Rock was waken from its slumbers when Stuart Miller and Jim Loxham climbed *Patriarch of the Pillarites* at E3, Bob Wightman and Al Phizacklea followed on to add *Pauli Exclusion Principle* (E3) and *The Terrorist* (E2) to the crag.

The forthcoming Gable/Pillar guide provided the incentive for much activity in the area, Steve Hubball and S. Brierly combed the buttresses of Green Gable Crag, and Phizacklea added seven lines to Gable Crag with various partners.

Phizacklea was particularly active at this time, due to a strike at the Barrow shipyard. Dow Crag became a regular haunt where *Abracadabra* (E5) and *Genocide* (E4) were added. (This was because the crag is the closest to

Al Phizacklea leading Sea Shanty, Boat Howc

Photo: John Holden





home, as he couldn't afford much petrol on the strike pay!). One of his better routes of this year was *Alehouse Rock* (E4) on the Gargoyle Wall of Esk Buttress.

In Langdale, the guidebook writing team of Dave Armstrong, Phil Rigby and Alan Greig were finding several good lines upon Bowfell. They climbed *Edge of Darkness* (E4) and *Moonshadow* (E3) on Flat Crag, but the best of the bunch was Rigby's *Ribolletto* (E4) on the North Buttress of Cambridge Crag. Down the valley on Raven Crag, Walthwaite, an insignificant route was climbed called *Into the Light* (E5). The significance of this event was that it was the first new route to be led by a young lad called Dave Birkett, who would rise to dominate Lake District climbing over the next decade, but more of him later!

The fellsides along the Duddon Valley are covered by a multitude of small, but impeccable outcrops. This quiet backwater has seen over 520 new routes added since the publication of the 1987 guidebook; a phenomenal period of development. The main protagonists in the Duddon know who they are, and they know the significance (or not) of their contributions, so I won't fill these pages with endless boring details.

I'll start 1989 upon Scafell, where Martin Berzins and Chris Sowden fought their way up *Siege Perilous* (E7), but only after resorting to using a point of aid, which was removed by him on a repeat of the same line a couple of years later. Al Phizacklea and Dai Lampard added three lines to Deep Gill Buttress in a single day, the best being *Alamogordo* (E5). Around this period, Ray McHaffie was renovating the path between Foxes Tarn and Scafell, which gave him the opportunity to develop Piers Gill Crag, a lovely steep wall that he passed twice a day on his journey to work. Not many people can claim that on their CVs!

Three hard routes were climbed on the Eastern Crag in this year, these were *Beyond the Pail* (E6) on Dove Crag by Martin Berzins and Alan Manson (now there's a blast from the past!), *Phoenix in Obsidian* (E6) on Iron Crag by Mark Radtke, and *Mindscape* (E6) on Iving Scar, Kentmere by Paul Cornforth.

There were many smaller crags developed this year. Goats Crag in Watendlath was opened up by Karl Telfer and his team, Paul Ross and Denis Byrne-Peare unearthed Spout Head Crag near Styhead Pass, and Ted Rogers and Rick Graham plucked the final lines from Hardknott Crag. Further down Eskdale, Ian Turnbull and Alan Wilson churned out more lines on Gate Crag, including the bold *Sassenach*, at E6.

Another area which received its first "modern" routes was the very unpopular venue of St Bees Head, but this was to be a radical departure from the earlier traditional explorations of the late sixties. Andy Jones and Al Phizacklea set up bolted belays for top-roping above a steep wall that became known as Apiary Wall. Realising this action was nothing but controversial, they cun-

ningly arranged a meeting between selective local climbers who were in favour of the project, the BMC and the RSPB. From this, an agreement was reached which allowed bolted climbing to take place in an area that did not disturb the nesting birds, and the Scabby Back area was developed. It was Jones, Johnny Adams and the West Coast Brigade which spearheaded this work, and St Bees has become an excellent retreat from the western side of the Lakes when the weather is poor.

The pace of development was accelerating, and 1990 was remarkable for the sheer number of desperate new routes, with E7's being hammered out like machine gun bullets.

Three hard lines were added to Flat Crag in Langdale; Martin Berzins and Neil Foster climbed *Deadlock* and *Remains of the Day*, which both weighed in at E6, but this was overshadowed by Dave Pegg's *Flattery*, which gives a potentially lethal finish on sloping holds at E7.

Berzins added a similarly desperate route on Pavey Ark called *Angel Heart* (E7), which was climbed on the same weekend as a line by Andy Hyslop and Martin Bagness called *Assault and Matrimony* (E4). Dave Pegg's other major contribution was the bold line left of *The Cumbrian* on Esk, called *First, Last and Always*, which again weighed in at E7. This audacious line still awaits a repeat ascent, and is probably one of the oldest unrepeatable lines left in The Lakes. Al Phizacklea and John Holden chipped in with *Esk Ape*, which takes a devious line up the wall right of *The Cumbrian* at a more amenable (E5). This pair also found two routes on the East Buttress of Scafell which were led on-sight, *Chiron* and *Cerberus* (both E3), and also climbed *British Bulldogs* (E5), one of the harder lines on Gimmer. Stephen Reid and Joe Grinbergs also climbed *Remembrance* on Gimmer, which is a more popular line due to the appeal of its HVS grade.

Over in Borrowdale, the main buttress of Goat Crag saw three routes squeezed between existing lines, *Lithuania* (E4), *Un-named* (E5) and *Trojan Horse* (E6), the product of Phizacklea, Jones and Berzins. At the base of this crag, Dave and Alistair Nichol developed the scruffy Dalt Quarry, which for a short while became a popular venue despite its miniscule size.

The main route added to Dow Crag this year was Al Phizacklea's *Pandora's Box* (E5), which follows a line right of *Tumble*. Across on the steep North Wall of Dove Crag, Berzins and Foster raised the standards with both *Pail Face* (E6) and the sustained *Vlad the Impailer* at E7. They followed this up later with *Bucket Dynasty* at E6, thus completing a somewhat obsessive four year domination of the crag by Berzins.

The popular venue of Castle Rock in Thirlmere provided Stuart Miller with space to add *The Watchtower* (E2) whilst Andy Hyslop and Wilf Williamson climbed *1100 Miles* (E4) and *Green Eggs and Ham* (E1) on the South Crag.

Probably the best discovery of 1991 (best in the sense that it is still popular, and therefore remains clean) was Sergeant's Crag Slabs up Langstrath by Ray McHaffie and Joe Boshier. The modern classic of *Lakeland Cragsman* (HVS) was their best line here, and Mac soon imported Colin Downer to lead the harder remaining lines such as *Aphasia* (E2). Closer to Keswick, Malcolm Lowerson and Nick Steen overhauled the long neglected Walla Crag with more than a dozen routes, which unsurprisingly, still remain long neglected.

After an eight year break from Lakeland climbing, Pete Whillance returned to Eskdale and revived interest in the lower outcrops, with the development of Bell Stand Crag and Beckfoot Quarry. Upon Esk Buttress, an unusual incident occurred, when the rotor blades of a Sea King helicopter struck the crag on a rescue mission, causing it to crash-land on The Moss below the crag. Martin Berzins and Neil Foster discovered a section of the blade on the ledge below a thin, overhanging crack which inspired the name *Desperately Seaking* (E6). The arête left of *The Red Edge*, which had a notch chipped out of it by the accident, was later climbed by Al Phizacklea and John Holden to give *The Leading Edge* (E5).

Ross and Pete Lockley added *Swansong* (E2) to Deep Gill Buttress on Scafell, from which he had the pleasure of taunting Phizacklea by sending him a photo of the line, on which was scrawled the comment "You missed this one, Al!" Phizacklea had recently climbed *The Unforgettable Fire* (HVS) and *The Scarlet Pimpernel* (E4) in the same area; and had indeed missed that one.

This was the year that Dave Birkett came to prominence, but unfortunately not in the way he would have wished. He climbed *Daws Rides a Shovelhead* on Raven Crag, Langdale, the long awaited superdirect line up the centre of the crag, which he tentatively graded E7. Shortly after his ascent, he returned and controversially added a bolt for protection. From what I remember at the time, he was encouraged to undertake this action by other locals, the excuse being that the fixed pegs were poor, and it was for the wellbeing of future ascensionists. There was a predictable outrage, and the bolt was soon chopped. Undaunted, Birkett later repeated the route in its original state, declaring the grade to be E8. He wasn't to make any more rash errors like that again – in the future, if anyone had the temerity to repeat one of his routes, they had to be in the same league of incredible boldness.

### **1992 to the present day – The Birkett Dynasty**

Like a bull released from the cage of traditional climbing restraints, Dave Birkett burst upon the Lakes with a string of new routes of extreme difficulty, some of which are unrepeated to this day. On Hell's Wall in Borrowdale, he climbed the main arête direct to give *Bleed in Hell*, and the prominent crease to its right became *Hellish*, both lines bearing the grade of E8.

Down the valley on Gillercombe, he climbed the thin crack of *Caution* (E8), an unrepeatable line that Dave reckons is one of his best ever routes. He also added *The Whipping Post* to Reecastle Crag at E6, only to see Paul Cornforth beat it for difficulty with *Burn at the Stake* at E7. Birkett's hardest line for the year was on Iron Crag, where *If 6 Were 9* weighed in at a massive E8/9. In a single season, Dave increased the level of difficulty in the Lakes by a full grade.

Unusually he was beaten to the first ascent of Critical (E6) on Dow Crag by his partner Glenn Sutcliffe, after he slipped off after the crux. Also on Dow, Andy Hyslop and Dave Kells added *The Shining Path*, a well protected E5, which had 5 peg runners and as many repeats in a week. Al Phizacklea and John Holden plugged some more gaps here with *Ildi Kiss* and *Dow Jones Index* (both E4), Holden then teamed up with Dave Winstanley to add some easier lines which brought his tally of new routes on Dow in a single day to 5!

Tom Walkington, Steve Hubball and Jim Cooper developed the many walls and buttresses overlooking Langdale below the summit of Crinkle Crag, and found many good, remote routes between VS and E3.

Over on the white wall of Bowfell Buttress, Jim Cooper and friends climbed the superb *Air on a Bowstring* and *Hope Beyond Hoping* at E3. Later routes from Ted Rogers and Rick Graham, such as *Ask Ted* (E3) and *Pragmatic* (E3), brought the crag to maturity.

Stephen Reid started his long association with Pillar Rock this year, when he added *Gorre* (E1) with John Campbell, and later they climbed *A Caucus-Race* (E3) with Caroline Fanshawe, both routes being on the Low Man area of the crag. Colin Read climbed his first new route for seventeen years when he added *Lucky Strike* (VS) and other lines to Grey Crag in Buttermere. Both Read and Reid were to go on to become the guidebook writers for those two particular areas of The Lakes.

Crag were still being discovered in Borrowdale, Paul Ross and Pete Lockley opened up Paper Crag, and Ray McHaffie developed Christmas Crag at the end of the Year. The old team of Ed Cleasby, John Eastham and Mike Lynch got together to add four lines to Sandbed Gill Crag in Thirlmere, which I believe were the last new routes to be climbed by Cleasby. 1993 saw the opening of Goat Scar at Shoulthwaite in Thirlmere, where Paul Ross, Pete Lockley, Colin Downer and Dave Birkett got into the action, creating twenty steep lines across the face. There was some reaction by the landowners North-West Water, who objected to the cleaning which took place, and the crag fell back into obscurity. Nearby on Iron Crag, Glenn Sutcliffe and John Fletcher added another strenuous line aptly called *Pumping Iron* at E7.

Another hard line was added to The Napes when Iain Turnbull climbed a link between *Incantations* and *Supernatural* on the Tophet Wall area to produce *Golgotha* at E6.



There were some final routes added to Dow Crag just before the guidebook deadline, Al Phizacklea's *Free Flight* (E5) and Stuart Wood's *Paths of Victory* (E6) being the pick of the bunch. Phizacklea and Wood also visited the unpopular Blind Tarn Crag, where they climbed *Blind Vision* (E3) and *A Picture of Life's Other Side* at E5.

So the year slipped by and 1994 seemed quiet on the climbing front in comparison. The main topic of conversation was the unbelievable loss of the chockstone from the Great Flake on *Central Buttress* on Scafell, which tragically killed the young climber involved.

There was some action on Esk Buttress, where Steve Crowe and Karin Magog climbed the right-hand side of the arête left of *The Cumbrian* to give *The Northumbrian* at E6. Unaware of this line, Phizacklea and Holden created a line finishing up the left-hand side of the same arête called *Perseus* at E3. They later teamed up with Keith Phizacklea to add *Harkster* (E2) and *Lookster* (E5) to the steep wall above the Frustration Chimney. Also in Eskdale, Tony Thompson and Rob Southall added to the valley's selection of hard routes by climbing many short problems on a variety of the lower crags in the area.

In Buttermere, Bill Young and Bill Hannah showed that they were still active by adding *The Israelite* (E3) to High Crag, then Stephen Reid and Steve Stout climbed *A Close Shave* (E2) on the same crag. Across in Borrowdale, the indomitable sod-busting team of Ray McHaffie and Colin Downer stripped Millican's Buttress of its covering of vegetation to discover a handful of routes, before importing Paul Cornforth to tackle the harder lines.

The following year saw the last lines added to Scafell prior to the publication of the guidebook. Nick Wharton pulled out a bold lead to ascend the obvious undercut arête below *Edge of Eriador* to create *Entonox* (E7), a long admired line which had been attempted by many in the past, including Jeff Lamb. Around on Deep Gill Buttress, Martin Berzins threw a rope down the last big unclimbed line on a quiet midweek afternoon, and was astonished to find Al Phizacklea and Mike Lynch standing at its base. Their meeting was quite by chance, but Al had shown this line of the leaning arête to him a couple of years previously, and had proposed the name *Death Arete*, due to its unmistakable aura. Martin managed to climb up the side of this edge to create an E7 called *Def Arete*, as it wasn't quite the line intended. Phizacklea and Lynch were in the area after re-discovering Round How Crag, just above the Corridor Route path to Scafell Pike. After the publication of the guide, Chris Hope, Dez Johnson and Stuart Miller pounced on the remaining unclimbed lines to create a delightful venue for a summer's afternoon.

Paul Ross was busy re-discovering Boat How Crag on Kirkfell around this time. He climbed several fine routes such as the unpronounceable *Dehydroepianarosetrone* (or something like that!) at E2 and *The Final Voyage* at HVS and the superb Scenic Cruise, which is one of the best HVS's in the Lakes.

However, the best line utilised the imported talent of a Mr. Dave Birkett, who dispatched the fine bold route up the front face called *Flagship* at E5. These were to be the last major additions to Lakeland climbing from Ross before he emigrated back to the States.

Across on Pillar, the combined talents of Colin Read and Graham Swainbank swung into action to discover *Hawkeye* and *Sundance* (both HVS) on the West Face of High Man. This team were to gain a reputation by discovering a host of overlooked mid-grade routes on popular crags right across the Lakes.

Over in the Eastern Lakes, Ian Wheatman and Dave Birkett climbed a couple of lines on Mart Crag, below Greenhow End up Deepdale. Later visits to this venue with Ken Forsythe, Ted Rogers and Rick Graham developed the crag, which now boasts several excellent lines on compact rock. Over in Swindale, Chris King and Ron Kenyon climbed *Loaded Dice* (E2/3), and Jamie Robertson and Jim Beveridge added *Tautalist*, out of the *Tamarist* roof at E4, both on Fang Buttress. Paul Carling soloed two lines close to *Vasectomy* on Truss Buttress to create a couple of E3's called *The Gelding* and *A Snip in Time*. The best line added to the East around this time was Nick Wharton's *Road Rage* on Raven Threshthwaite, a quality E7 climbing directly up the shield crossed by *Top Gear*.

The major route of 1996 was Paul Cornforth's *Rock Lobster*, a hard E7 down on Cam Crag in Langstrath. The smaller outcrops down this dale led to the addition of *Pot Luck* (E2), *Supermodel* (E1) and *Slab Happy* (E2), a trio of excellent routes from Stuart Miller, Al Hewison and Kit Wilkinson. Development of Langdale continued in expectation of the new guide, an example of this was the opening of *Black Wars* on Pike O'Blisco. Here Max Biden, John Shepherd and Andrew Atkinson added half a dozen atmospheric routes between VS and E4.

Steve Reid and Steve Stout discovered *Goodbye to All That* (E1) on Pillar, which unusually for such a remote crag, became popular and is now a modern classic. Reid later added *Pillar of Salt* (E1) with Jonathon Preston on the same crag. The afore-mentioned pair of Read and Swainbank continued to discover some fine mid-grade lines with *Zenith* (VS) on Scafell Pinnacle, *Manhattan Project* (E2) on Greatend Crag, *String of Pearls* (E2) on Gillercombe, *Octavia* (HVS) on Buckstone How and the instant classic of *Capella* (E1) on Pavey Ark.

There was a rash of hard new routes on Dow Crag in 1997, where Andy Hyslop and Stuart Wood teamed up to create *B'Rake of Eye and Twist of Gob* (E5) on "A" Buttress; the difficult *Motherstone* (E7) to the right of *Pandora's Box*, and *Homeland* (E6) behind the Woodhouse block on "B" Buttress. Al Phizacklea added *A Grand Day Out* (E2) with John Holden which crosses "A"

Buttress, and *Staring at the Sun*, which goes directly up the same Buttress with Craig Matheson at E4.

A talented new group was emerging from the confines of the Keswick climbing wall around this time. It was Adam Hocking's *Disorderly Conduct* on Reecastle at E8 that heralded the beginning of the Keswick Youth Team, a group of teenagers that have embraced the noble tradition of "pushing the boat out" at every opportunity.

Mick Lovatt, Tim Whitely and Steve Wilcock added two hard lines to the small crag on the side of Helm Crag in Grasmere; ycs, the green one everybody sees as they drive from Ambleside to Keswick. *Meltdown* (E7) and *The Necker* at E5 rounded off a short period of development for this neglected crag.

The major line to fall in 1998 was the huge arête left of *Lost Horizons* on the East Buttress, *New Horizons* (E8) was the long admired and extremely bold product of Dave Birkett and Andy Hyslop. They later swapped leads to fill the obvious gap of *Lost Horizons Direct*, which went at E5.

On the East Gully wall of Pavey, Keith Phizacklea and Craig Matheson added the sustained *Comatose* at E5, before venturing across to Dow Crag. Here they climbed *Woodhouse's Arete*, (E6) a fine photogenic line that has since gained a reputation for sending leaders on long flying lessons.

Up in Borrowdale, Duncan Booth and Ian Turnbull climbed *Satan's Little Helper* at E7 on Black Wall in Langstrath, and Martin Dale pulled out the stops to give *Camouflage*, also E7, on Cam Crag. Read and Swainbank continued their mid-grade quest in Langdale, where they discovered *The Veil* (HVS) on White Ghyll and on Bowfell Buttress they added *Flight of the Ravens* (E2) and *Silent Witness* (E2).

On a slightly different note, the quiet recess of Far Easedale echoed to the thunderous roar of the collapsing central mass of Deer Bield Buttress. This removed several classic routes such as *Deer Bield Buttress* and *Deer Bield Crack*; and left in its place a smooth groove, guarded by some precarious unstable blocks.

The final year of the millennium kicked off with Dave Birkett's stunning *Impact Day*, which climbs the blank overhanging wall of Pavey's East Gully at E9. This was repeated twice over the next couple of months, such is the pace and competitive spirit of modern climbing. Colin Read and Graham Swainbank filled their entire year by stripping Shelter Crag in Langdale, where they added over 20 routes in as many visits to the crag.

The steep west wall of Kern Knotts saw three difficult lines added this year. Dave Armstrong led *Cat's Whisker* at E4; Duncan Booth added *Brown Badger* (E5) and Phil Rigby climbed *Cat Napping* at E5. Over on Boat How Crag, Rick Graham and Ted Rogers continued the development started by Paul Ross by adding *Keel Haul* (E3), *Jolly Roger* (E2) and *Poseidon Adventure* at

E4. It will be interesting to see whether this fine crag attracts enough climbers once the new guide is published to keep its walls clean in the future.

Young Craig Matheson led his dad Rob up through the big cave on "A" Buttress on Dow Crag to produce "A" *Ordinary*, which at E7 is somewhat harder than the other "Ordinary" routes on Dow. Rob proved he is still going strong by leading a direct version of *Holocaust* at E5 on the same crag, some thirty years after he climbed the first ascent of the route.

Over in the Eastern fells, Mike Took and Tony Marr climbed four stiff lines on Eagle Crag in Grisedale, the best of which is *Raptor* at HVS. Phil Rigby and Mark Heatherington added *Surgical Cut* (E3) and *Incision* (E4) to Truss Buttress in Swindale. It was around this time that Si O'Connor started to boulder around in Kentmere, discovering dozens of new problems. This aspect of the sport became increasingly popular as information was made freely available over the internet, and a healthy website now exists for boulderers.

The new millennium heralded further advances to the concept of bold climbing. James McHaffie, the talented son of Ray, led the awesome wall left of *Flying Circus* on Eagle Crag, Borrowdale to produce *The Ego has Landed* at E9. This route has a single peg runner low down, but the climbing is sustained well above any vestige of protection, not one for the faint hearted! On the same crag, Wes Hunter towed Colin Downer up *Restraint of Beasts* at E5 and Adam Hocking blasted up *The Guns of Naverone* (E6) with Al Wilson and Downer.

The visit (or strictly visits, as he reputedly visited the crag 14 times) of John Dunne to the big, bad, bold, leaning headwall above *Tophet Wall* resulted in the incredible *Breathless*, which at E10, was claimed to be the hardest route in the country. However, after repeats from Dave Birkett and Dave MacLeod, it has been suggested that the grade may *only* be E9!

Birkett reckons his own big route of this year, *Talbot Horizon*, which follows the unprotected right arête of *Lost Horizons* on Scafell, has an even more serious crux! This route involves a barely controlled swing around the arête on small sloping holds, where a potentially fatal outcome awaits if you fail to maintain contact with the rock.

The year 2001 will be remembered for the Foot and Mouth outbreak which curtailed access to much of the area. However, Martin Armitage and John Unsworth found the predictably named *Silence of the Lambs* on Shepherd's Crag, one of the few crags open to climbers. Once the ban was lifted, Colin Read and Norman Tonkin grabbed a handful of new lines on Grey Crag in Buttermere, including four routes around the *Dexter Wall* area.

2002 saw a couple of desperate lines climbed on the East Buttress of Scafell, from whom else, but Dave Birkett. The long admired (and often tried) thin crack right of *Borderline* became *Welcome to the Cruel World*, which has a ridiculous single small finger lock on this overhanging wall as the crux of this

E9. The grade does not reflect a serious lead as the protection is good, but it is said that this line has the hardest technical move of any route in the Lakes. The other line is the beautiful, but bold continuation groove that rises above *Borderline*, which is called *Another Lonely Day* (E8), named after the fact that Dave hardly ever met another soul up there all year. Al Phizacklea and John Holden visited Round How on Scafell where they contributed another dozen routes in this delightful area.

Stephen Reid climbed the first new line on Napes Needle for over 70 years with his route *Sick Heart River* at E3. Phil Rigby followed this up by gymnastically pulling over the overhang of the top block of the Needle to give the photogenic *Wasdale Roof*, also E3. Who would have predicted that this old emblem of the Fell and Rock held the scope for a couple of modern routes?

Two new E5 were added to the walls above Jack's Rake on Pavey Ark. Martin Dale and team climbed *The Golden Rule* and Dave Menaduc led Chris King and Ron Kenyon up *Luminous Dog*.

Across on Dove Crag, James McHaffic powered his way up the first route on this crag for 11 years to create the impressive *Fear of Failure*, at E8. This addition sparked off a fantastic wave of development the following year. Al Wilson became one of the major protagonists, his *Dusk Till Dawn* (E7) became instantly popular, quoted as being "The most out-there route in The Lakes!". Chris Hope not only climbed the stunning *Fetish for Fear* at E8, he also inadvertently took a massive 25 metre dive attempting to repeat another line, narrowly missing the deck. Apparently one team gearing up at the base of the crag was so horrified at this spectacle they packed up and left the scene! The activity here soon attracted the interest of Steve Crowe and Karin Magog, whose *Brasov Incident* (E7) and *Inside Out Link* (E6) plugged the remaining gaps. Karin went on to become the first woman to lead an E7 in the Lakes with her repeat of Berzins strenuous *Vlad the Impailer*. Dave Birkett added *The Finest Hour* at E8 the following year, leaving this crag with the most impressive concentration of hard routes for any mountain crag in Britain.

Raven Crag in Thirlmere lay in the shadow of such excitement until Duncan Booth linked the start of *Gates of Delirium* to the top of *Das Kapital* to produce *The Second Coming* (E6), which he followed up with a new *Infestation Finish* at E7. Duncan also plugged one of the obvious gaps on Truss Buttress in Swindale when he led the bald groove above *Sostenuto* at E7 to create *Relentless Rage*.

Across on Scafell, Dave Birkett and Rob Fielding climbed the true line of *Death Arête* on Deep Gill Buttress at E8, making this Dave's fifth major route on Scafell, which are all E8 or harder! The significant factor of this statement is that none of his routes here have ever been repeated, which illustrates Dave's long standing domination of Lakeland climbing.

James McHaffie teamed up with Adam Hocking and Alan Wilson to visit Eagle in Borrowdale, where they climbed a hard finish to *Flying Circus* to give *Alter-Ego* at E8 and the awesome wall right of *Post Mortem* to create *Awkward Logistics*, also at E8.

At the lower end of the grading spectrum, Colin Read and Graham Swainbank hit Pikes Crag hard this summer, leaving *Megalith* (HVS), *The Steeple* (VS), *The Pulpit* (VS) and *The Dungeon* (HVS) smouldering in their wake. Al Phizacklea and John Holden plugged some gaps on The Napes, their best contribution being *Turdus torquatis*, which lies to the left of *Abbey Buttress* at E2.

Roger and Debbie Wilkinson along with Dick Bates re-discovered the delights of Kettle Crag in Langdale where a dozen new routes were added. Across on Gimmer, several new mid-grade lines were found by Stephen Reid. He climbed *Bracket Direct* (HVS) and *Stone the Crows* (E2), both around the *Bracket and Slab* region of the crag with Chris King, and *Detour* (VS) to the left of *Asterisk* with Nigel Timmins.

2004 was quiet in comparison, but Long Band Crag in Borrowdale gave *The Sado-Masochist* (E6) and *The Professional Direct* (again at E6) to Duncan Booth, which was followed by Chris Hope and Alan Wilson's *The Machinist*, which also weighed in at E6. The other big line of this year was *Liquid Wall* (E8) on Raven, Threshthwaite, which links *Liquid Engineering* to *High Performance*, and was the creation of the quiet, but talented Andy Mitchell.

Dave Menadue and Duncan Davey unearthed four short lines in the region of *Rectangular Slab* on Pavey Ark in Langdale which were graded between E1 and E4. Over on Grey Crag in Buttermere, Read and Swainbank plugged a gap on *Spider Wall* to create *Arachnophobia* at E2.

On to 2005, which could well be called the year of Ennerdale. On Pillar Rock, Chris King and Stephen Reid climbed *Thin It Is* (E1), *Graviton* (HVS) and *Photogenic* (E2) on The Shamrock, and over on the West Face they added several more routes, the best being the run-out *Mirror, Mirror* (E2) and *Rib and Rib Climb* at E1. Close by, Al Phizacklea and John Holden climbed five routes in Mirk Cove, but were spotted removing a grass ledge (a single small grass ledge, mind you) by an ornithologist, who reported the incident to English Nature. It took some diplomatic soothing from the BMC to settle the situation, but it was a salutary reminder to all new-routers that any degree of gardening could lead to prosecution. Colin Read and Phil Fleming were quietly re-discovering the best lines on the Ennerdale Face of High Stile where some belting lines were climbed, including the fine arête of *Painted Lady* at E2/3.

Phizacklea and Holden continued to plug away at the gaps on Dow Crag, where they added a couple of lines between HVS and E1 around the flanks of

“A” Buttress, and one on Upper “B” Buttress at E1. John Daly and Dave Hannah also added *Artful Dodger* (HVS) up “A” Buttress, which illustrates that even on the popular crags, there are still middle grade routes to be found. Martin Bagness and Steve Ashworth delved away on the wall below Jack’s Rake on Pavey to unearth four lines, the best being *Mars* at E3, which lies to the right of *Crescent Slabs*. In Borrowdale, Reid and Will Hurford climbed a couple of good routes, including *Mad Dogs and Englishmen*, which takes a line between *Gillercombe Gully* and *Gillercombe Buttress* at VS.

A mention must be made of Barry Clarke, who, upon the release from the shackles of employment, spent the summer developing dozens of small crags which lie within walking distance of Seathwaite. Mick Lovatt and Tim Whitely amazed everyone by ascending *Deer Field Groove*, the dangerous line left after the collapse of the buttress, which they chose to give the all-encompassing grade of XS.

Sadly, 2005 also saw the loss of the most charismatic character The Lakes has ever seen, with the death of Ray McHaffie.

I will finish this report with one of the most remote crags in The Lakes. This is an isolated buttress high in the centre of The Screes in Wasdale, well seen from the road in the setting sun, which picks out a huge overhanging arête. The laborious approach did not deter Dave Birkett from climbing *Nowt But a Fleeing Thing* (E8) up this awesome feature, allowing Karin Magog and Alan Wilson to obtain one of the most fantastic sets of first ascent photos ever taken.

Apologies are given to the protagonists of winter climbing, but there simply isn’t the space to include their recent activities in this article. Their tale will have to wait for space in a future journal.

What of the Future? It has been predicted for many years that unclimbed rock will run out in the same way that oil will run dry. This is inevitable, but there are still some blank-looking challenges left on the popular crags, and the remote walls will still reward those willing to walk. Grades will continue to rise, but a limit has simply got to be reached, and this limit may be defined by a tragic event; but I sincerely hope this is not the case. Having said that, first ascensionists must be circumspect with their gardening activities, as the environmental brigade are out there, watching and waiting....

Take care, all of you, and enjoy your climbing.

Living in Barrow, Dow Crag was our local crag, where we had climbed regularly as teenagers. We had steadily worked our way up the Graded List of Climbs, until they were all ticked and we then looked for new ways.

In 1962, the steep, rock walls of the upper section of 'B' buttress had not been climbed. They were crossed by the Giant's Crawl gangway at half height, forming two distinct sections, neither of which offered any obvious means of ascent. But they offered the most attractive challenge at the time and in March I tried to climb the upper section. This attempt ended at the steep crack, when I was unable to climb the blank area of rock that would give access to the easier looking groove on the right. (Climbed in 1972 and now incorporated in Four Sticks). A few weeks later I tried again, but was still frustrated by this short impasse. The steep wall on the left had a narrow foot ledge but the lack of any handholds above prevented access to it. However hard I tried, I couldn't leave the holds in the crack without swinging out of balance. There was a tiny spike in the crack above on which to hang a line runner, the only one on this pitch, and eventually I took rope tension from this whilst moving carefully left, just in balance, until some better handholds could be reached. Now, out on the arête, in a very airy position, the holds fortunately improved and steep, but steadier climbing lead to the top.

Towards the end of April we were back on Dow again, this time looking for a route up the lower tier. At the lowest point of this sector, a groove could be reached, which led up more steeply via some hollow sounding flakes. These took sling runners which gave some reassurance, but the wall above was steep and lacking decent holds. After a few attempts to continue up, I was attracted to follow a traverse to the right, which continued diagonally upwards, with no obvious way up the steep wall above, until a smooth glacis was reached, that provided a poor stance beneath a bulging wall. There was no easy way up this either, but a thin crack to the right gave access to an easing in angle in the middle of the face. Above, the angle steepened again, but more importantly, the holds leading to a hanging groove soon ran out and forced another retreat. (Climbed in 1971 as Holocaust).

At the next opportunity, early in May, I was back on the wall again, but this time, decided to try an unattractive green-looking groove on the left of my previous high point. To reach it involved a delicate rising traverse on very poor handholds and without any protection. Each move required concentration to get it right, and the confidence to keep going, as retreat would have been very difficult. Once in the groove a flat-topped spike gave a good hold and a welcome





Allan Austin & Geoff Oliver on possibly the third ascent of Nimrod *Photo: David Miller*

respite, but the groove above steepened and the holds were poor. Each time I tried to stand on the spike, the sling I had placed on it tended to lift off, and this was the only protection. I kept trying and eventually committed myself to go for the last few technical moves to reach Giants Crawl. This had been the crux of the whole route; difficult, committing moves and serious. It was some time later that a large hold was gardened out to the left of the groove, which provided the easier finish now used.

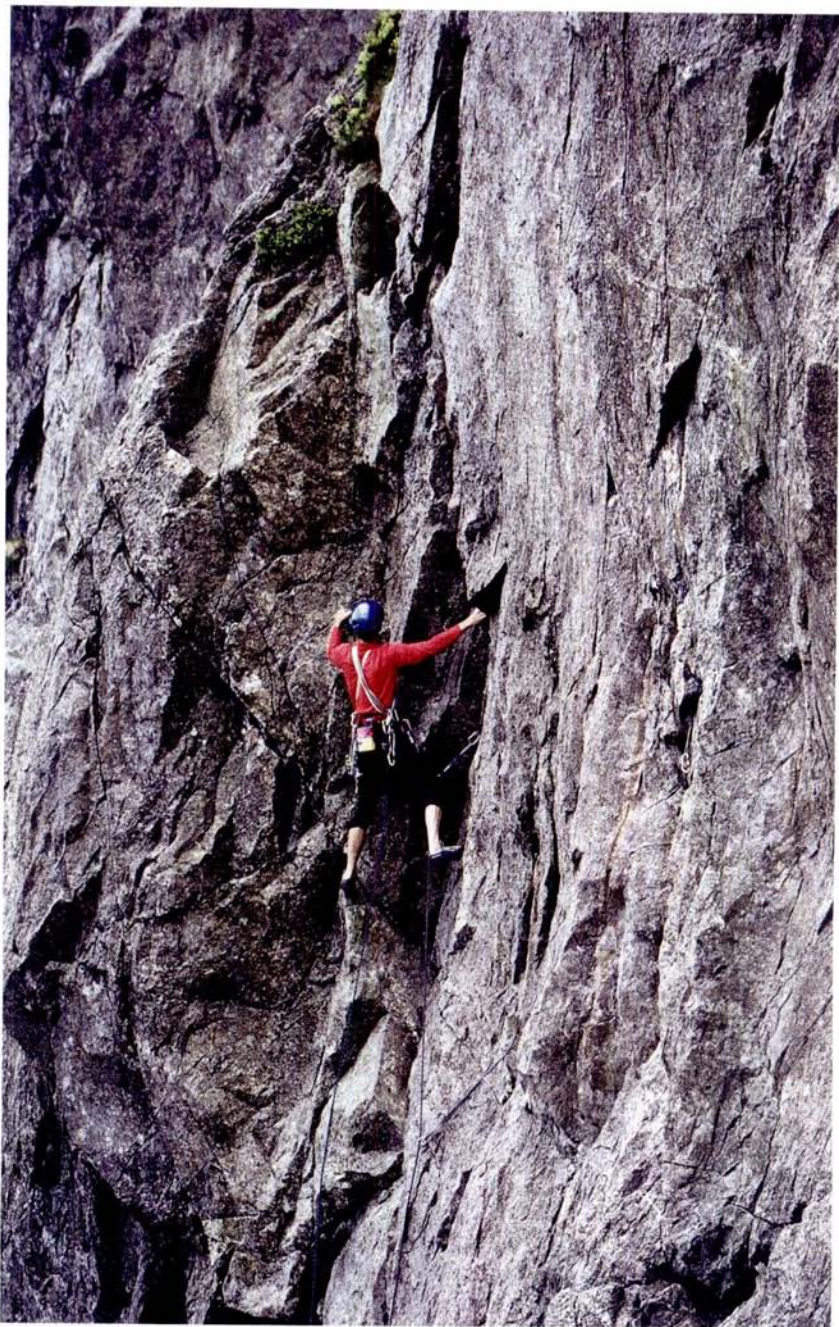
Except for Les Bell, on the first pitch, the various seconds that had been prepared to hold my rope on the pitches had not wished to follow them. Also, as the pitches had been climbed at different times, it seemed fitting to link them all in one ascent and, consequently, on 2 June 1962 I climbed Nimrod in its entirety with Dave Kirby.

It was early July in 2002, but the weather hadn't really been fit enough to climb on mountain crags until then. Suddenly, a forecast for a warm and sunny day prompted a phone call to John, who quickly agreed to go up to the Lakes the following morning. On the drive up we discussed options and as John had not done Nimrod before, he was quite happy to accept my suggestion to go up to Dow Crag with that in mind. It was midweek, consequently there were few climbers on the crag and none on our route, but we decided to warm up on something easier first. After lunch, as the familiar shadow fell on the crag and the wind sprung up, we added a sweater and roped up at the foot of the route.

The first pitch looks steep, but good holds lead in from the right to reach the groove, which is amenable until it steepens beneath some flakes. Even now the security of the flakes gives concern, but there is good protection beneath, and they can be used carefully to make progress until the blank wall above bars the way. The obvious way goes up to the right, and after an awkward start, the angle slowly eases as delicate traversing under the steep headwall leads to a glacié. The belays are poor here and a much better stance can be taken on the ledges below, after making an awkward little descent.

Returning to the glacié beneath the green groove, that seems to be the obvious way up this section of the crag, is aborted because the rock is compact and holdless. However, a little to the right, a thin crack can be climbed to a large thin flake which is somewhat to the right of the groove. From here, a delicate rising traverse with very poor handholds and little protection requires confidence and commitment. It seems to be necessary to keep stepping up, just in balance, and with little chance of reversing the moves if you get it wrong. Eventually, it's a relief to reach a flat-topped spike at the foot of the final section of the groove. The groove above is lichenous and the holds are poor, but well out to the left, there is the large finishing hold. This takes some





David Miller having a happy Anniversary on Nimrod

*Photo: John Proud*

bold moves on the steep wall to reach but once gained the difficulties quickly end as the Giants Crawl gangway is reached.

The final pitch up the jutting wall above the gangway looks exposed and bold. The initial, easy looking corner is deceptively awkward and the steep crack above quickly runs out of holds. This is not the way to go; after placing protection in the crack and stepping down, it is possible to make a bold, balancy step onto the narrow shelf that leads left. It's the sort of move where 'barn dooring' seems the likely outcome until you get the holds and sequence right! The handholds are poor until the left end of the shelf is reached and it is possible to relax again. But it is very exposed out there and the climbing demands concentration all the way to the top.

It had been a fulfilling climb, sustained, quite bold in parts, and with increasing difficulty, leading to a climax on the top pitch. But with modern equipment and fore knowledge quite a different proposition to the spring of 1962 when the route had been first climbed. The first ascent was made without prior inspection or gardening. At that time, protection depended solely on nylon rope and linc slings but there were very limited opportunities to use them on such climbs. Rock boots (PA's) were a great improvement over gym shoes, that they had just replaced, but harnesses were not available and it was still normal to tie the rope around the waist. Under those circumstances, the safe on-site lead of harder climbs, particularly first ascents, demanded a very steady mental approach, which was aided by a level of technical ability that gave a good margin for retreat.

## HELVELLYN TO HIMALAYA

*Alan Hinkes*

Alone at 8,500m in the dark, in a snowstorm on Kangchenjunga, I started gasping, hyperventilating and shaking like a leaf. It was a panic attack, brought on by the stark realisation that I was likely to perish. I was not on Helvellyn or Sharp Edge or Cat Bells on a dark winter evening for fun, this was the real thing. No car was waiting in Glenridding, Wythburn, Scales or Keswick. I was on my own near the top of the third highest mountain in the world on V.Diff/Severe snow and ice covered rock, winter grade III or IV ground. This was the Death Zone and I was dying. I had pushed to the summit alone at around 7.15pm just before nightfall around 7.30pm. I actually stopped one pace short of the top in respect to local Sikkim people who regard Kangchenjunga as a sacred mountain. I took a summit photo of myself, with a picture of Fiona and Jay, my daughter and grandson.

I had to pull myself together, convince myself I could do it and descend to the relative safety of my bivouac 1,200m below. A lot further than Brackenclose from Scafell Pike summit. I often go out for fun at night in the Lakes, so have plenty of experience in the dark, but this was very different, serious and for real. The fresh snow fall was building up a massive amount of avalanche potential. I pushed the fear and anxiety to the back of my mind otherwise I would be overwhelmed by it, out of control. Somehow I concentrated and focussed on the task of surviving and not falling off as I climbed down the steep face. Nothing else mattered and I attacked the situation with grim relish – this was a major epic. Yet in a peculiar way I felt a heightened sense of pleasure and enjoyment. It was as if I came out of my physical body and mentally and ethereally, in a very intense way, enjoyed the near death experience.

I had left my bivi at 7,400m at 0130hrs on 30 May 2005 with Pasang (who turned back about one hour from the top) summiting at 19.15hrs and getting back at around 0330hrs on 31 May – a 26 hour push. From there it was still two days of arduous and avalanche prone descent to base camp.

Back from Kangchenjunga, I went straight to Keswick, Borrowdale and Shepherd's to solo Little Chamonix and then to Black Crag for Troutdale Pinnacle. I was happy to be back in the Lakes.

A school camping trip to the Lake District sparked off the mountain addiction in me. A wet and windy slippery scramble up Striding Edge in typical Lakeland weather was my introduction to the big hills. In retrospect it should have put me off. I had basic, bordering on dangerously inadequate, kit by today's standards. A voluminous plastic cycle cape I was wearing billowed

up in the wind and nearly whisked me off the ridge. It was a great adventure to me as a young teenager and Helvellyn felt like a real mountain. It still does.

Summer or winter, with or without the hordes, it is one of my favourite peaks anywhere in the world. I have often had Helvellyn to myself – it is not always covered in people. From my first scramble up Striding Edge and down Swirral, I knew I wanted more of the hills. The North Yorkshire Moors close to Northallerton, my home town, were the first hills I experienced, but Helvellyn and the Lakes gave me that first taste of the mountains.

I hitched over at weekends when at Northallerton Grammar School or arranged lifts with Cleveland Mountaineering Club members. Later when at college in Newcastle, I would travel to the Lakes nearly every weekend – often staying in the Salving House as a guest. Always the bigger, longer rock routes would beckon. If it rained, we would do long easy rock routes in the wet or big fellwalks.

In the 1980s I started going to the greater ranges climbing new routes on 6,000m peaks in Cordillera Blanca, Indian Himalaya, Nepal and Tibet. In 1987 I climbed my first 8,000er, Shisha Pangma. Steve Untch and I made a two-man lightweight Alpine style ascent of the central couloir on the north face. It was a steep learning curve experience. We treated Shisha Pangma as if it was a 6,000er. Luckily the weather held and we bagged a new route and the summit. Steve paid a high price with frostbite and had several toes amputated. I realise now it was a bold push on a 8,000er and could easily have been terminal. We committed ourselves for the top with no fixed ropes or even a tent, only bivi bags. We had joined the Polish International Expedition led by Jerzy Kuzukza. This was Kuzukza's fourteenth 8,000er and my first. He was the second person after Messner to climb all fourteen. In base camp we had a celebration for Jurek, as his friends called him. Kuzukza was a very down to earth, affable chap, very much like a British climber in outlook. I learnt a lot from his approach, which was caution, tempered with determination and push when required. I never imagined in 1987 that I would go on to climb all fourteen. It was an unthinkable, virtually unattainable goal, akin to reaching the moon.

I left Shisa Pangma base camp and went straight to Lhotse south face with another Polish mate, Krystof Weilicki. We nearly got up the unclimbed south face but were prevented by the worst October weather in living memory.

The following year I climbed the south face of Menglungtse West. A North face of the Droites-like climb in difficulty, but on a 7,000m peak. This was a Chris Bonington led expedition with a search for the Yeti theme. In autumn 1988 I went on a Doug Scott organised expedition to Makalu. An avalanche near the top put paid to that attempt.

I still never imagined that all the 8,000ers were possible, but wanted to climb more of them as I felt they were the ultimate test of endurance and stamina and definitely had the longest routes, even longer and colder than on Pillar Rock – though not as greasy! In 1989 I joined the French ‘Esprit d’Equipe’ team organised and led by Benoit Chamoux. We climbed the rarely approached South Face of Manaslu – so far this is the only British ascent. In 1990 we bagged Cho Oyu and another new route on the North Face of Shisha Pangma.

I made my first visit to the Karakorum in 1991, climbed Broad Peak and saw K2. It burnt into my psyche and I had to climb it. K2 (8,611m) stands 4,000m above base camp on the Godwin Austen Glacier. Its south east (Abruzzi) ridge is a lot steeper and longer than Striding Edge. In 1992 I attempted Nanga Parbat with Doug Scott. Rockfall nearly wiped a few of us out. In 1993 I got my first bash at K2 from the Pakistan side. A summit bid had to be abandoned to help down an exhausted climber from another expedition. His mate had already fallen to his death down the 4,000m south face.

In 1994 I tried it again from the Chinese side. I got to within 5 hours of the summit on the north face and turned back as I reckoned the final slopes were too avalanche prone. No mountain is worth a life, coming back is a success and the summit is only a bonus.

I returned for my third consecutive attempt in 1995. Some people said I was obsessed with K2. I reckon it was true Yorkshire grit (a great rock to climb on) and determination, tempered by early tramping on the Lakeland fells. I climbed K2 but tragically 8 were killed – it truly is a savage mountain and no easy plod. I got the Outdoor Sportsman of the Year Award for showing skill in risk management on K2 – backing off three times before climbing it.

In the 12 months from July 1995 to July 1996 I knocked off four 8,000ers – K2, Everest, Gasherbrum 1 and Gasherbrum 2. That is when the Challenge 8,000 seed germinated. Only four people had climbed all fourteen. I had only six left to summit and hatched a plan to climb six in a year.

In 1997 I climbed Lhotse solo and got high on Makalu. Essentially that meant eight 8,000ers in less than two years. I was worn out, debilitated. On Nanga Parbat I strained my back lifting a 40kg load. Ten days or so later a sneeze set off by flour or a burnt crust on a chapatti caused a slipped disc. I was incapacitated in dire pain with back spasms. A humble chapatti had put paid to my attempt on the ‘killer mountain’. After a further ten days my back settled enough so I could struggle and stagger down low enough for a helicopter to come and take me to Islamabad. Apparently a sneeze or a cough is a common way to prolapse a disc but not usually caused by a chapatti. I got the Golden Chapatti Award that year for the most bizarre climbing incident. I do think humour is important – there is no need to take yourself too seriously.



Self portrait with Family on Kangchenjunga

I needed serious physiotherapy. Some thought I would never go to a big mountain again. Rock climbing helped strengthen my back so that was a good excuse to spend more time in the Lakes enjoying cragging.

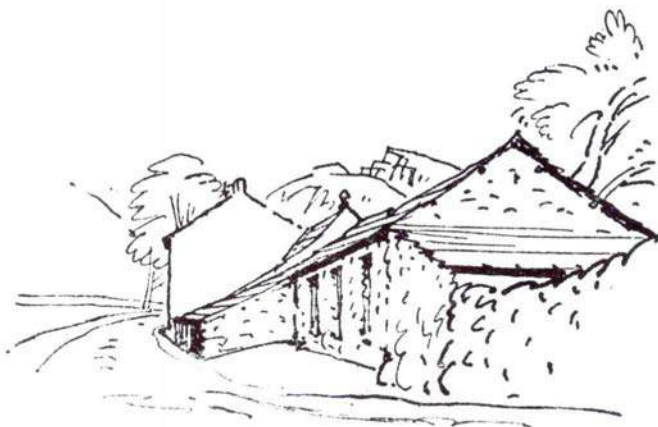
Kangchenjunga in 2005 was my remaining 8,000er. It was fifty years since the first ascent in 1955 by Joe Brown, George Band, Tony Streater and Norman Hardie. Only a few metres lower than K2, I knew that Kangchenjunga would be a serious and dangerous final test. Yet it felt like an old, if gnarly, friend waiting for me. My plan was for a lightweight two man ascent – just Pasang and me, as on Dhaulagiri. However, Kangchenjunga turned out to be a near death experience – a grand finale. Now I feel a sense of freedom. I have achieved my goal and feel satisfied. Anything more will be a bonus. I just want to enjoy climbing and fellwalking. I might do the 244 Lakeland hills. Certainly I will be out as much as possible on the Lakeland crags.



This winter I had some fantastic days out on the fells. The Red Tarn face of Helvellyn was in good winter condition and I found two testing grade IV pitches. A couple of times I had Helvellyn to myself on late icy afternoons in March. The views across Ullswater to snow-capped Cross Fell and the Pennines and to the rest of Lakeland the other way were breathtaking. All the Lake District to the west was snow covered like a mini Himalaya range. I felt at home – who needs the Himalaya?

#### Challenge 8,000 – The Big 14

Everest	8,848m	1996
K2	8,611m	1995
Kangchenjunga	8,597m	2005
Lhotse	8,511m	1997
Makalu	8,470m	1999
Cho Oyu	8,201m	1990
Dhaulagiri	8,164m	2004
Manaslu	8,163m	1989
Nanga Parbat	8,152m	1998
Annapurna	8,091m	2002
Gasherbrum	8,064m	1996
Broad Peak	8,047m	1991
Shisha Pangma	8,046m	1987
Gasherbrum II	8,043m	1996



## JOINING THE CLUB FIFTY YEARS AGO

*Hilary Moffat*

I was first introduced to the Lake District by my mother who in her youth had been an enthusiastic fell walker and rock climber. Whilst at University I had started rock climbing and was active in the Mountaineering Club. After finals I was chatting with my friend Ken Richardson about how to carry on climbing after leaving University. He said a friend of his was introducing him to the Fell & Rock and while he couldn't take me along too he got me Lyna Pickering's address. I had of course heard of the Fell & Rock but never imagined joining such an important club.

With great trepidation I wrote to Lyna in 1955 and as I didn't know anyone she invited me to go on a beginner's meet at Raw Head. Unfortunately my friend June who also wanted to join, was teaching in Germany at that time so I had to go alone. She actually had a head start on me as she was Edward Scantlebury's granddaughter.

Even now I do not know how I found the courage to attend that meet. Lyna had said I could stay at the hut on the Saturday night but as I didn't dare ask to stay on the Friday night and having no transport I stopped in a small cottage in Chapel Stile. I was so worried I was sick all night and the toilet was a little house at the bottom of the garden. In the morning I walked up to Raw Head and as I'd been told to arrive at 10 o'clock I waited down the road until it was the right time. Afterwards several people said they'd seen me and wondered what I was doing standing by a tree. Once the ice was broken I was made welcome and had a great weekends climbing.

June was back at Christmas and we both went to the New Year meet at Langdale. Bill Kendrick and Harry Spilsbury as Vice Presidents were leading the meet. While we were out I asked Bill if he would propose us for the club and June asked Ruth Spilsbury to second us. Bill kindly said he would but Ruth said "Oh Harry would be much better" and asked him. We now had a proposer and seconder so hopefully we sent in our application forms and to our amazement and delight were accepted.

Having been asked to write about my early days in the Club I find it difficult to pick out things which will interest other people. How kind and friendly people were to us, not just in the huts but offering me lifts as I hadn't got a car. In those days I thought nothing of walking down Borrowdale to the Salving House after getting off the bus at Keswick at 10 o'clock on a Friday evening. Raw Head was somewhat easier as there was a Coniston bus I could catch to Skelwith Bridge. Unfortunately we seldom got to Brackenclough or Birkness. For one Eskdale meet I went by train to Ravenglass where several of

us were collected by John Lagoe. There were no trains on a Sunday evening and I was given a lift over Hardknott by Bobby and Muriel Files. The road, although tarmac'd, was very narrow and they had a big car. At the top of the pass Muriel had to get out and direct Bobby as he couldn't see the road over the top of the bonnet.

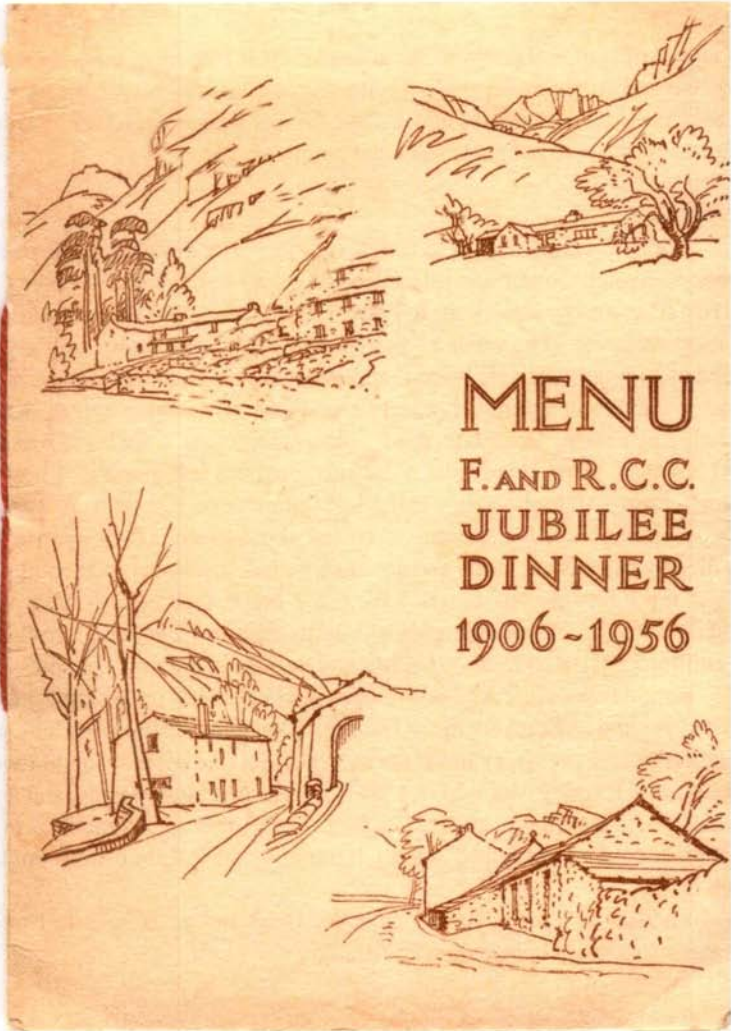
With transport difficult, members kept named boxes containing food in the huts. One unfortunate member named "Pool" returned some weeks later to find his box empty as his name had been mistaken for the communal box.

Another hazard to overcome in those days was turning the water on at the huts in winter. The first time I was faced with this was soon after I joined the Club and arrived first at Raw Head Cottage. I suppose the instructions were easy to follow if you had an idea what you were looking for, if it wasn't dark and if there wasn't six inches of snow on the ground. It took me ages and I didn't dare go and ask any of the more august members who were in the Barn though no doubt they would have been quite happy to aid a damsel in distress.

There were many interesting people who were active in the Club at that time such as Howard Somervell, Bentley Beetham and Rusty Westmorland who are now mountaineering legends. I also remember meeting four of our original members at the 1906-1956 Jubilee Dinner held in the Royal Oak Hotel, Keswick. These were George Abraham, Henry Braithwaite, Jonathan Stables and J. B. Wilton, and other guests of honour included Mrs. M. Elliott-Smith and Mrs. J. Newby, daughters of Edward Scantlebury who had been largely responsible for formation of the Fell & Rock. They were referred to on the menu card as "chips off the old block". The card, showing the Club's then four huts was designed by Heaton Cooper and the apt quotations were chosen by Lyna Pickering. It was a time when the Club was looking back with pride on its first fifty years and it was looking forward with confidence to its future.

There were certainly some odd characters around then. One in particular would appeal to the Almighty every time he needed a foothold. He could clear the hut in a matter of seconds when he appeared looking for someone to climb with. Another was the member who had a Siamese cat which she took on a lead for quite extensive walks until one day she arrived at the ODG without the cat but with a new fur handbag over her arm. Probably now we are the odd characters.

Looking back now; how glad I am that I managed to go to that meet at Raw Head. I shall always be grateful to Ken, Bill and Harry for their help and support. Since that time the Club has been a major part of my life. I never imagined in those early days that I would ever be other than an ordinary member and certainly never reach the dizzy height of President. Far more important than this are the countless happy times I have had with the Club, the friends I have made and above all in meeting my husband, Peter.



MENU  
F. AND R. C. C.  
JUBILEE  
DINNER  
1906-1956

## LAKELAND WEEKENDS, 1949-1950

Dick Pool

The lowest of National Service low, at weekends at Catterick, we were a bore to ourselves and worse to the army. Quite soon we hit on a plan: "Please Corporal, may we draw compasses and set out for a weekend exercise?" 'Drawing Compasses' became a regular weekend practice.

For example:

Friday evening, four of us (one a very provisional Fell & Rock member) hitched to Scotch Corner and on to Penrith, by now in the dark. There for the first two (Bob and I), a quick lift to Patterdale and we set off towards Kirkstone, our meeting point. The other two (John and Peter) eventually, and joyously, passed us, riding in the vast back of some glorious open tourer. We ran the last yards to Kirkstone summit, but only to see the now empty tourer dropping towards Ambleside. Cold, late, tired, but moonlight; so, walk on to Ambleside and Langdale. Raw Head (just a cottage then) we left alone at 4 am, but a Bullman barn just up the valley had a loft full of hay.

Bullman's cattle were due to be fed about dawn. The cowman's fork into the hay gave us all, cattle and cowman included, a sharp awakening, albeit sharper for John than the others. We put a brave face on it – were we not soldiers? Well, er ... and we marched up to the New Dungeon Ghyll, where Mr. Bullman gave us a hilarious, early and definitely not army breakfast.

Saturday was fine, and uneventful. Over Bowfell (or Rossett, I forget), Scafell Pike and to Brackenclouse. The log, to keep the rules about right, shows my father (a real member) and three as in the hut that night. The hut was, us apart, empty. It really was, and is, a glorious place; a glorious day, and a glorious hut. I kept a tin there, clearly labelled "Pool", and took some time to work out why it seldom contained what I thought I had left, but often contained much more.

Sunday, wet, was just hop over Sty Head and hitch back to Catterick. Compasses returned before the stipulated 6 pm.

Another example:

John and I 'drew compasses', and a large packet of army sandwiches, one Saturday morning and hitched to Penrith, Ambleside and then along Thirlmere shore. In gathering gloom, we slogged up the slopes of Helvellyn and settled down to a meal of sandwiches (good, and filling, but we kept most for the dawn) a few hundred feet below the summit. In theory,

we were to sleep out. It did not rain, but cold, heavy dew, wet ground and wind did not exactly fit the theory.

At first light we walked to the summit with about ten minutes to spare. The cloud was well down, so we just laid out our breakfast, to eat at sunrise (by watch) as a consolation. With five minutes to go we were distracted and belittled by a group of school-girls, twenty or thirty of them, arriving to see the sunrise. When we had adjusted to this influx of civilisation, we turned back to our celebratory breakfast.

But of course you have guessed it. At that time they were Westmorland herdicks. I doubt now-a-days either the abolition of Westmorland nor anything else has affected them; in the late 1940s every Cumberland school-girl knew of them but, alas, until that sunrise we did not!

We wandered down to Patterdale, not even over Striding Edge, and hitched back to Catterick and food.

Another example, nearly a year later:

Our first winter at Catterick had been in a summer camp, Jerry-built, bricks-on-edge at that, just North of Richmond; and it had been a hard, cold winter. By our second winter, we had all been posted; John and I both to units in England. We decided to join family at a Fell & Rock gathering (I forget if it was a formal or informal meet) at the Old Dungeon Ghyll.

We met in Langdale, and luxuriated in the ODG. But we were faced with the last two days of the old year in geriatric company: we set out, in thick fog and high wind; we admired the view from Gable and played a University (hopefully) match of Noughts and Crosses in the fast falling snow – a draw – before dropping down to Brackenclose.

New Year's Eve dawned calm and clear. We (one ice-axe and no rope between us) walked up the slopes behind the hut and stood proudly on the Scafell summit; then set off for Langdale. Two hours later, it was very clear that we did not have the skill to get down a cold and iced Broad Stand. Scafell Pike and the ODG were a long way away, and darkness close. We retreated rapidly South to Eskdale.

In those years, the Fell & Rock had the Lakes well organised. A phone call between a Hargreaves and a Cross and we were snug, warm and feeding well in the best hotel in Eskdale; the ODG party was laughing at the folly of youth.

Next morning, New Year's Day, a simple walk to Langdale (I forget whether over tops or passes) and another night of Cross/Hargreaves luxury before farewell ODG and back to duty.

## ARTHUR DOLPHIN – AN OLD FRIEND REMEMBERED

*John Cook*

I first met Arthur in the late summer of 1941. I was approaching sixteen and Arthur was about a year older and already an outstandingly competent climber, the star performer at his favourite gritstone crag, Almscliffe, near Harrogate. Advised that, if I had aspirations to become a real climber, not just a fell-walker and scrambler, I should go there myself, I had cycled out from home in Bradford. The climbers who were there that Saturday, from all walks of life, welcomed me as one of the group and I soon found myself being taken up progressively more difficult routes on this extraordinary but increasingly attractive outcrop. Arthur would storm up the hardest established climbs at the request of others at the crag but always find time to coax me and other beginners there up lesser climbs. His only experience of Lakeland at that time was limited to what a schoolboy's pocket money could afford and what wartime conditions would allow, a few days at a time at the Coniston Youth hostel after hitchhiking from his home in Low Baildon. He'd already ticked off most of the established climbs on Dow Crag, persuading school friends from Salt's Grammar School to follow him. While still only fourteen he'd led Great Central Route and Black Wall.

That first summer for me on gritstone was a tremendous introduction to the sheer pleasures of moving up difficult rock and I'm sure that, with successes in climbing some of the harder Almscliffe routes and in ignorance of the wider mountaineering world, except through books, I began to have inflated opinions of my own ability. There was nothing like cold, wet Lakeland weather to deflate such opinions and that came about the following Christmas school holiday when Arthur, another school friend of his and I arranged to stay for a few days at Mrs. Naylor's at Wasdale Head. The first day struggling up Kern Knotts Crack and the Needle was enough to convince me that I still had everything to learn. When the rain relented and we went on to Scafell, Jones's Route Direct from Lord's Rake was the first objective, mainly dry rock interlaced with ice runnels that seemed to cover most of the holds. As third man I became so chilled that I unroped and left it to Arthur and our other friend to force a way to the top. It was a salutary lesson.

The climbing scene today is so very different. With its hugely increased numbers of participants it can be considered a popular activity with every town seeming to have at least one climbing wall and outdoor equipment shops in some places, not least in Lakeland, outnumbering the shops catering for the everyday needs for living. Perhaps inevitably, because of major advances in technique and equipment, standards reached now would have seemed fanciful half a century or so ago. In those distant days of the 1940s a new climb at the



Arthur Dolphin leading Kipling Groove

*Photo: Marie Blake coll.*



top level, Very Severe, was a rarity and it would be almost certainly on a major crag as very few of the smaller crags had been explored or indeed were thought worthy of attention. As a pioneer in the Lake District between 1944 and 1953, the year of his death, the name A.R. Dolphin appears as creator of over 30 new climbs. It is pleasing to recall how his routes received early repeat ascents and usually went on to become popular. The classic Kipling Groove immediately became a test piece for hard men and remains on the 'tick' list of many aspiring climbers today. There is little doubt that Arthur was an inspiration to his own and the next generation and that he has become a legend for all succeeding generations. Arthur's legacy of first ascents includes Demon Wall in 1945, Whit's End in 1947, Kipling Groove in 1948, Deer Bield Buttress in 1951, Hell's Groove in 1952, and his final contribution of Communist Convert in 1953.

An outing with Arthur could have its exciting moments, not so often on a crag as on a motor bike, especially if that was a combination with sidecar on loan from Reg. Hainsworth. Somehow Arthur became confused about accelerating or braking around left and right-hand bends and, when he got it wrong, we could find ourselves climbing up a bank on the wrong side of the road. That happened when he was driving Jack Bloor and me to Raw Head for a weekend. Expecting the worst, I had opted to ride on the pillion. When the whole contraption summersaulted beside the fortunately quiet A65, I had hastily slid off backwards and sustained a good deal less bruising than the others. The next day we climbed rather slowly and painfully.

On a crag everything was much more under control. There were, however, some interesting moments. One never to be forgotten happened one late autumn day in Wales where Arthur, Des Birch, Joe Griffin and I were having one of several forays, climbing almost always in 'nails' with the slightly dubious conviction that Welsh rock was so rough that such footwear was better than the alternative, 'rubbers'. On this occasion, however, the day was so damp and the rock so greasy that 'nails' were undoubtedly the better option. We had decided to climb the Great Slab route on Cloggy's west buttress, having got up the Chimney and Pigott's routes on the east buttress the previous day. The notorious long first pitch, with its Green Caterpillar still hanging rather loosely, took us longer than we expected, and by the time all four of us were at the stance above, we realized that it was beginning to get dark and also starting to rain. Inexplicably we had no watches and had been quite alone at the Climbers' Club hut, Helyg. The thought of reversing the pitch or of abseiling over the overhang below from no real anchor belay did not appeal at all. Wasting no time, Arthur set off in the gathering darkness up the unknown rock above, calling down to us after a while to tie on more rope so that he could find a belay. After running out some 200 feet he called for us to follow as best we could, tied on at various places. We repeated the expedient in the same way and so emerged bedraggled

at the top of the crag. A little demoralized, to say the least, we found our way somehow without any torches, of course, to the railway line and walked down that to Llanberis, keeping the rope on all the way perhaps because we needed moral support or more probably because we were too cold to untie the knots. Even with hindsight it is difficult to come up with a practicable way for our party to have extricated themselves without Arthur's sheer determination and outstanding skill.

Although none of our small group at that time really knew much about the wider climbing scene, we were so very fortunate in the opportunities on offer. We might not have had any modern equipment. Our boots, if we could afford them, were made and nailed by Robert Lawrie or perhaps Robinsons of Keswick. Our ropes were initially of hemp or manila, almost impossible to coil when wet, and we rarely had more than one sling and simple karabiner each as safety gear. Yet there seemed to be so much we could do with enjoyment, whether cycling from home at weekends along uncrowded roads to meet up with the usual friends at a gritstone crag or, just occasionally, accepting lifts from almost any passing motorists to reach a more distant climbing venue. Of course, wartime had its severe disadvantages but for us youngsters, unlike our parents, it was easy to forget the dangers and privations and just enjoy an extraordinarily quiet countryside and crags where, if one met anybody else at all, it was almost certain to be someone one knew. Everybody was helpful and concerned and, in that atmosphere, it was easy for us to put aside thoughts of war service to come and to concentrate on preparing for university and enjoying every moment of our leisure time. Only the occasional news of a friend or relative killed in action or of tragedies from enemy bombing in the less fortunate parts of the country cast shadows over our privileged lives just then. All that was to end abruptly for me after two years with call up to the Royal Navy.

My Naval career consisted mainly of intelligence duties within the UK, permitting occasional trips to meet old friends, including Arthur, of course, and to keep in touch with the climbing scene. On one such outing Arthur and I completed our first new route in Lakeland, Nocturne on Gimmer, climbed quickly on part of the crag that was new to us at the end of a day spent enjoying some of the well-known routes on the main faces. Quite suddenly demobilized, I found myself at university making new climbing friends in the club there and leading them up some of the easier routes in Wales, Scotland and Cumbria. There were times then, however, when I teamed up with Arthur again who had meanwhile begun to pioneer hard climbs, especially on Scafell, Esk Butress and in Langdale with new climbing partners. Together, however, we came to grips with Engineer's Slab on Gable Crag, imagining that it would be suitable for a damp day in 'nails' and ignorant that it still awaited a third ascent after some fifteen years. We retreated with ignominy after a couple of pitches and came back soon after-

wards when the rock had dried out but still finding the route far from easy. At least that was my assessment as, leading through, it fell to me to lead the final crux pitch, a greasy open chimney. Arthur just swarmed up it, clearly perplexed that I had taken so much time. We did agree that it was a splendid climb. Also on Gable on another brief visit, Arthur persuaded me to try the second ascent of a route he had recently worked out, Tophet Chain, running across the wall and Great Slab of that fine buttress. The rock was wet, of course, but I was assured that it was quite an easy VS and would suit 'nails' very well. Arthur was several inches taller than me with a proportionately longer stride and on the long descending traverse of the Slab, he managed to straddle a huge detached flake in a near vertical groove. He warned me to do the same as it looked loose but, having much shorter legs than Arthur, I had no option but to put one foot on it while trying to step across. The flake promptly shot downwards to the scree far below with a frightening crash, taking me with it until I executed a long pendulum swing and finally landed at speed into a fortunately grassy groove. Well held by Arthur and only bruised, I was able eventually to climb up to him and we completed the climb.

There were easier days, including a memorable one on Scafell when, after walking over from Langdale, we scuttled up Pinnacle Face routes on a lovely warm afternoon and then, before the evening was spent, fairly raced up CB. We might have been slower on the Flake had not that pitch fallen to Arthur to deal with. We seemed to do more than our share of girdle traverses with two 'Firsts' standing out, the traverse of Almscliffe's North West Face, when John (Pug) Ball joined us, and Gimmer Girdle, done while we were collaborating on a new edition of the Langdale guidebook for the Club. It was quite difficult for us to get together often to check out the climbs for the guide because of our respective commitments to university and industry. One day, while waiting for Arthur, I decided to check out some of the easier climbs myself where there would be no dispute about measurements or assessments. After some scrambling on Tarn Crag I thought I would have a look at Crescent Slabs on Pavey Ark, which I'd never climbed before. About halfway up I was horrified to hear much crashing above and, on glancing up very briefly before pressing myself close to the rock, I had a vision through the quite dense mist of a falling body surrounded by lots of flying rocks. The thud as the body hit the scree below was sickening but, at least, nothing had hit me and I was able to continue as fast as I could to the top and then race down Jack's Rake with every expectation of finding a dead body. It was there but, thankfully, it was a poor sheep. There was a distinct pause in my climbing then until Arthur arrived.

It was just afterwards that we looked round the unclimbed eastern buttress of the crag. We'd previously enjoyed Carsten's Rake End Wall on the main crag and wondered if we could find something of similar merit round the

corner. It was all rather disappointing. Each of us, as his turn came to lead a pitch, tried to force a way upwards instead of diagonally left. We were simply pushed off until we finished what we thought was a pretty unsatisfactory route. The name 'Hobson's Choice' seemed obvious to us but we might have known that years later several hard lines would be discovered by others up the rock we had considered impossible. Normally Arthur spent almost as much time considering a name for a new route as in doing the climb itself. He liked descriptive names such as self explanatory Kneewrecker Chimney on Raven, the long gone flake of Sword of Damocles on Bowfell, Trespasser Groove on Esk Buttress, referring to the use of a neighbouring climb, or Monkey Puzzle on Deer Bield, where the eponymous tree has long since disappeared. Occasionally he looked to mythological origins where the characters concerned suggested some important feature of the route or were relevant to names of other climbs nearby and so produced Medusa Wall, also on Esk Buttress. One name he had kept to himself, waiting for just the right new climb to receive it. It had to be a worthy route and really difficult, in fact 'ruddy ard'. So we eventually got Kipling Groove whose name remained a mystery to most for years.

We had known each other for only twelve years and Arthur was only twenty-eight when, tragically, he slipped while descending the easy way down from the Dent du Geant unroped. I had lost a great friend and the climbing world one of its most brilliant leaders and pioneers. It is doubtful whether, because of his altitude sickness problem, Arthur would ever have achieved his ambition to climb big peaks in the Himalaya but he would surely have gone on to tackle the hardest Alpine routes and perhaps the big walls and towers of the Americas. His list of high-quality first ascents in Britain, and especially Lakeland, would, I am sure, have been much extended. For those privileged to have known him there remains the picture of that unlikely looking lanky youth, pale faced with birdlike features and straight blond hair, hardly a typical climber in appearance. Yet the character shone through, the physical and mental strength and an abundance of honesty and generosity. He was special.

## MALLORY'S ROUTE OR NORTH-WEST BY WEST

Stephen Reid

In 1913, George Leigh Mallory was a 27-year-old schoolmaster at Charterhouse. The man who was to later utter the now famous phrase 'Because it is there' when asked why he was going to try and climb Everest, and subsequently died in an attempt on the summit, visited the Lake District on a climbing trip in September that year, accompanied by Alan Goodfellow, a Charterhouse pupil – they stayed at Rowhead in Wasdale.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> they climbed *Jones's Pinnacle Route from Deep Ghyll*, then down *Slingsby's Chimney*, traversed to the *Fives Court Ledge*, and descended the lower part of *Moss Ghyll*. This was followed by *Collier's Climb*, and *Moss Ghyll*. On this first day they were joined by Harold Porter and Nigel Madan. On the 7<sup>th</sup> the pair climbed a new pitch on the *Napes* that is now incorporated into *Abbey Buttress Variations* (VD), and the next day they made a new route on the *West Face of Low Man on Pillar Rock* which they named *North-West by West*. They graded their Pillar new route Severe and a description subsequently appeared in the *Climbers' Club Bulletin* (No 9) of October 1913, and *Climbers' Club Journal* (Volume 3, 1914).

The description ran:

**'North-West by West'** A way was discovered on Low Man between the North West and West Climbs. The party traversed round the foot of the cliffs under the slabs where the North-West lies and above the bounding gully. They followed scratches' till the gully's head, a conspicuous chockstone, was perhaps 40 yards in front of them, and then struck upwards, slanting still to the right until almost directly above the chockstone. Here a strenuous effort was needed to climb a vertical wall of 10 feet. Another steep wall guarded a crack in a vertical slab. The crack itself was too small to accommodate a whole leg, and the leader went up beyond it and traversed back. Above the crack a choice of routes presents itself. The right hand is recommended, because a handsome pinnacle provides security 10 feet higher up, and it will probably be wise to use it even if the left hand way were chosen. The climb ends in view of the cairn which marks the top of the North West. Its length is about 200 feet. Leader needs 60 feet of rope. Rock firm throughout.

We know Harry Kelly was armed with the above description when researching the first Pillar guidebook in 1919 but he was unable to locate the

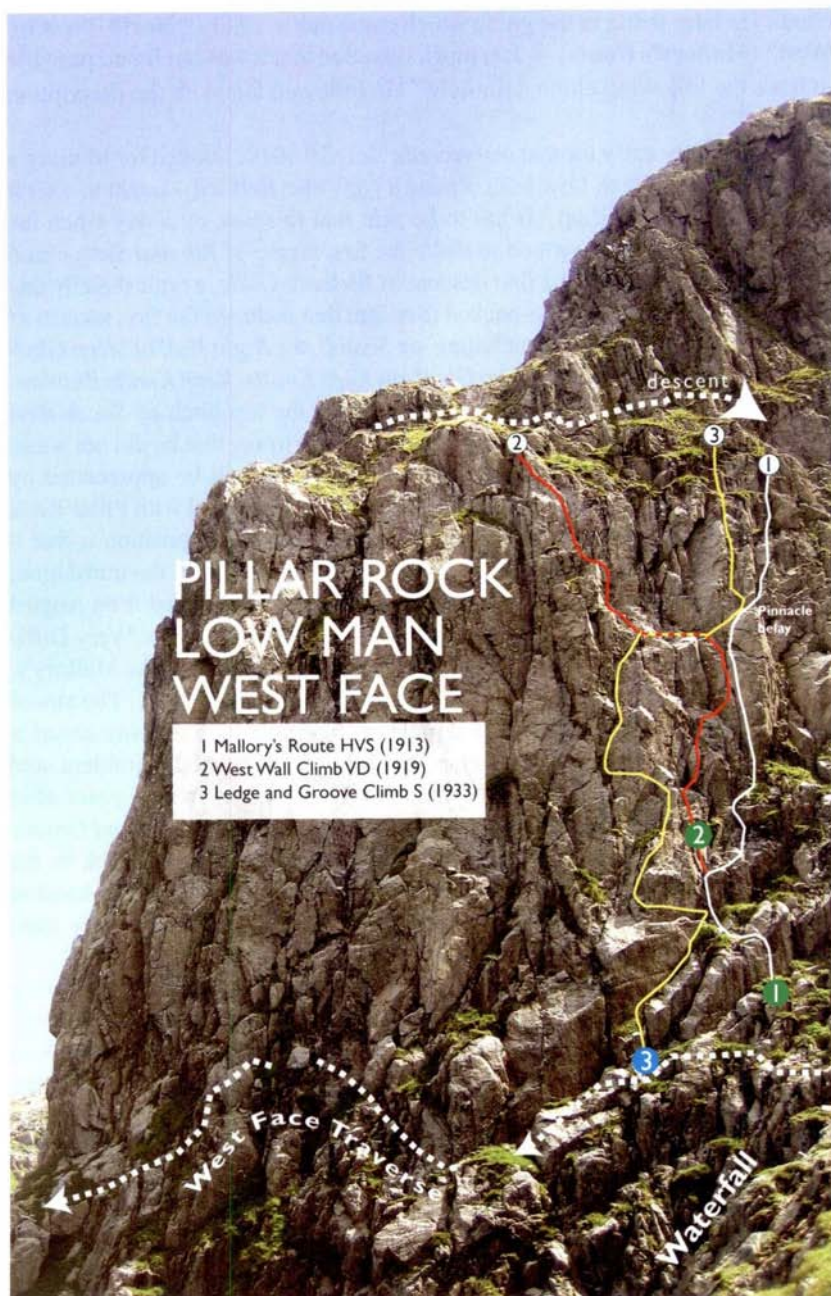
climb. He later wrote in the guide which came out in 1923:- "**North-West by West**" (**Mallory's Route**) — It is much regretted that it was not found possible to trace the following climb definitely." He followed this with the description above.

His diary entry for that day records 'July 29 1919: Looked for Mallory's Climb on West Side of Low Man. Found a New one. Self led — ought to visit it again before writing it up.' It has to be said that this was on a day when he, Holland and Crawford went on to make the first ascent of *Rib and Slab*, climb *Savage Gully*, and make the first descent of *Walker's Gully*, a typical Kelly day out in the middle of an action-packed fortnight that included the first ascents of numerous major new climbs including, on *Scafell*, the *Right Wall of Steep Ghyll* and *The Waiting Room from Steep Ghyll*, on *Kern Knotts*, *Kern Knotts Buttress*, *Central Climb*, and *Flake Climb*, and on *Pillar*, the top pitch of *South-West Climb*, *Sodom and Gomorrah*, so it is probably safe to say that he did not waste that much time trying to find Mallory's climb, but it will be appreciated by anyone at all familiar with guide-book writing in general, and with *Pillar Rock* in particular, that the description is fairly vague, and my supposition is that it was written up some time after the event, and lost something in the translation.

Kelly's 'New one' was *West Wall Climb*, and he repeated it on August 31<sup>st</sup> 1920 with Holland and Pritchard, describing it in his diary as "Very Difficult, Short Pitches, Splendid Belays, Safe Climbing." The climb, like Mallory's, starts more or less directly above the chockstone in *Waterfall Gully*. The aim of the route is gaining a crack in a fine pinnacle beyond which the way ahead is barred by steeper rock. Kelly traversed left here and avoided the problem, and although he added other climbs to the West Face, it was twenty years after Mallory's ascent that AT Hargreaves and party finally put up *Ledge and Groove Climb* (S), a route which succeeded where Kelly had failed and took in the challenge of the wall above the pinnacle which it climbed via the left-hand of two shallow lichenous grooves. However, they approached the pinnacle from the left, reversing the traverse of Kelly's *West Wall Climb*.

And thus things stayed for over 70 years. More climbs were added to the face, but these were all to the left of *West Wall Climb*. Kelly continued to include the description of *Mallory's Route* in the guides but the exact line was never discovered and, with the appearance of the 1968 *Pillar* guide, the route was dropped.

In recent years I have attempted to step into Kelly's rubber-soled shoes both as guide-book editor and *Pillar* guidebook writer, so it was inevitable that Mike Cocker should turn to me when in his research into the *Wasdale Head Climbing Book* he discovered another description of *Mallory's Route*, one that was almost certainly written on the day the climb was completed. It runs:-  
Sept. 8. 1913 *Pillar Rock* West Face. North West by West



A short but highly diverting climb lies North of the West<sup>2</sup>. The party were traversing round the foot of the cliffs above the waterfall gully when it appeared possible slightly north of the final chockstone of this gully, to reach an inviting crack which cleaves a slab some 50ft. higher up. It is important to notice this before starting upwards since it is the key to the intricacies of the place; the slab itself faces nearly north and the line of ascent is directly above said chockstone. In the lower section a vertical wall of perhaps 10ft was in the way. The crack itself was highly agreeable and led, bearing to the right, to a fine pinnacle. The next section of 25ft seemed very difficult and it was necessary to ascend a further stretch of about the same length before the second man could move. The first step of this last stretch was a delicate traverse to the right (the second man however came up to the left, apparently without great difficulty).

The belays are good; but the situations are exposed. Sixty feet of rope are required between first and second. The cairn at the top is on a level with that at the top of the North West.

Sept. 8. 1913 Pillar Rock - West Face. North West by West<sup>1</sup>  
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 G. Mallory  
 A. Goodfellow.



Armed with both descriptions, *Mallory's Route* seemed likely to be a lot easier to trace and so it proved, for on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005, Chris King and myself made what is likely to be a rather unique second ascent. It was obviously important to get the starting point correct, but in this there was little difficulty. Standing on the *West Wall Traverse* directly above the chockstone in *Waterfall Gully*, we scanned the crag above us. There was only one crack of note visible and that was the fine crack in the north face of the pinnacle that is utilised in its upper half by *West Wall Climb*. There seems no doubt that this is the crack that the route takes, and that, unlike *West Wall Climb*, it takes it in its entirety – the question we had to answer though was how did they gain the crack?

When faced with this situation in tracing a line taken by any early climb (usually because I am lost!), I have long resorted to the ploy of trying to imagine the first ascensionist concerned armed with nothing more than a hemp rope and confronted by completely virgin cliff. Where would he have gone? The answer in this case is clearly that he would have taken the easiest way to gain his objective – the fine crack – and the easiest way by far from where we were was the short mantelshelf at the beginning of *West Wall Climb*. 'Here a strenuous effort was needed to climb a vertical wall of 10 feet' sums this up nicely and I have little doubt that this is where he started. This gains one an easy ledge where there are a number of possible looking lines. I tried several variations leading directly up to the crack, but on each was confronted with some most unpleasant climbing on mossy sloping holds that appear to be permanently seeping. I retired to the ledge to think, "Where would I go if I was Mallory?" and the answer again was blindingly clear – the short crack/groove of *West Wall Climb*. I followed this to its top from where an easy traverse right and squeeze behind a boulder gained me the foot of the crack. I pulled up a short groove to this, and moved up left past it, before stepping back right into it at a point where it became wider and then followed it to its top. It all more or less fitted – 'another steep wall guarded a crack in a vertical slab. The crack itself was too small to accommodate a whole leg, and the leader went up beyond it and traversed back' and 'the crack is enjoyable and bears right to a fine pinnacle'. I belayed on the pinnacle and Chris King came up to lead through – the question was – where should he go? The Climbers' Club description was more or less useless regarding this point, but the Wasdale Head Book was much clearer: 'the next 25 feet were very difficult and a further 25 feet led to a belay'. The first step of this last stretch was a delicate traverse to the right, but the second man then came up to the left.

Above the pinnacle (as I have already mentioned) are two vague lichenous grooves, the left-hand of which is part of Hargreaves's *Ledge and Groove Climb*. This left-hand groove looks much harder than it is, and the first move off the pinnacle is the crux of the whole climb, so it is not surprising that Mallory

tried the right-hand groove, possibly in fact after backing off the rather cleaner left-hand one. The right-hand groove looks beguilingly easy – just as soon as one has started by a delicate pull out rightwards to overcome an initial bulge. Here Chris discovered to his consternation that what looked like easier ground wasn't at all so, that reversing what he had just done would be very awkward, and that one difficult move after another needed to be made until finally some jugs arrived and enabled a pull onto a grass ledge. His relief on reaching this point was palpable and it is easy to imagine Mallory getting into exactly the same pickle and being left with no option but to force his way onward until he too thankfully gained a stance on the grass ledge. It is also easy to imagine his shaken second saying "I don't fancy the look of that much, swing the rope round and I'll try this other groove" and that, reading between the lines, is exactly what I think happened and is summed up in the Wasdale Head description.

There are nevertheless some inconsistencies. There is no mention of the boulder on the first pitch for instance yet this lies at the start of the crack, and we could not see an obvious belay above the upper grooves, though I must admit that we didn't really look that hard, but I have little doubt that we climbed substantially the correct line, for nothing else in this area of the crag could possibly fit the descriptions.

Mallory, together with his climbing partner Sandy Irvine, famously died on Everest in 1924, but David Robertson, Mallory's son-in-law, corresponded with Alan Goodfellow whilst gathering information for his 1969 biography *George Mallory*. Unfortunately Goodfellow, despite writing in 1961 that he remembered both the Gable and Pillar climbs 'quite vividly' is rather muddled in his recollections. In one letter, a paragraph that eventually appeared in the book, concerning a run out traverse, and which is ascribed to the Gable route, was in fact originally written up as part of the Pillar climb, with Pillar Rock being later crossed out in his typewritten letter and Great Gable substituted in its place in Goodfellow's hand. He also mentions this climb as being on the 'North-east face' which is incorrect whichever route he is referring to. It seems likely that the quote does in fact refer to the Pillar route, as there is no traversing at all involved in the variation to Abbey Buttress, and for that matter no bilberries either, whereas on Pillar both occur. It is also easy to imagine them having to break the long 120 foot pitch from the start of the route to the top of the pinnacle at some point where there were bilberries and no adequate belay (of which there are several on the pitch) due to having a rope that was only 60 feet long.

The following excerpt from Goodfellow's letter is worth reproducing, as it gives a good flavour of the weekend:-

11<sup>th</sup> September 1961

Mallory was my History Master at Charterhouse (1911-15) and

if I remember rightly my climbing with him was all done during 1913-14, in North Wales during the Easter holidays and in the Lake District during the Summer holidays. The only 'first ascent' that we ever did together was in the Lake District, and if I remember rightly it was the Northeast face of the ~~Pillar Rock~~ Great Gable. He and I had gone off together for what was intended to be a gentle scramble, but George got intrigued by what looked to be like a new way up the ~~Pillar Rock~~ Great Gable. About half way up we reached a small ledge covered with Bilberries, and were faced with the fact that to go back would be extremely difficult, while to go forward involved a traverse for which our rope was not long enough to enable me to maintain a belay. It must have been a very anxious moment for George, faced with the responsibility of an inexperienced school boy climber as his only companion, but he showed no trace of it and quietly suggested that we should eat all the Bilberries before we went on, following which we effected the traverse un-belayed with George leading the way and instructing me exactly where to put my hands and feet. He was quite the finest rock climber I have ever seen, with a wonderful sense of balance.

The Wasdale Hotel records will also contain an account of his climbing activities in the Lake District, as they do of my own father's climbing activities, who was one of the early pioneers there.

A rather touching letter in a youthful hand that Goodfellow wrote to Mallory on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 1913, the day after the Pillar Route, also survives:-

Dear George,

I arrived quite safely at about 10.30.  
I am returning your shoes which I found very comfortable. Dad is very pleased to hear how much we have done. He was one of the party with Collier who made the first or complete ascent of Moss Ghyll. He apparently used to climb a lot with Collier. He is very grateful to you for taking me and I agree with him that it was a jolly descent of you.

As it is now 10.45 I shall have to get to bed  
so good night.  
Yrs sincerely  
Alan Goodfellow

One other slight mystery concerns this climb, and that is that in Kelly's notebook that he kept to help him compile the 1935 FRCC guide to Pillar, both the CC Journal description and the Wasdale Head description appear, which leaves one wondering, that if we could locate the climb using these descriptions, then why couldn't Kelly? The only answer that I can suggest is that Kelly simply couldn't believe that Mallory could have succeeded in climbing the wall above the pinnacle belay, and therefore decided that the descriptions did not make sense.

The only other mention of *Mallory's Route* in contemporary literature is in George Abraham's *On Alpine Heights and British Crags* which was published in 1919. It is obvious though that the author has no personal knowledge of the climb as he confines himself merely to paraphrasing the Wasdale Head description, although he does add, with uncanny if unintended perception, 'considering its nearness to such a famous course as *North-West Climb*, the new discovery is scarcely likely to become popular'.

We have rewritten the description of *Mallory's Route* in the modern idiom and it will be included in all future editions of the Pillar Rock guide. It is rather surprising and pleasing that so much of the climb, including the crux pitch, remains unused by other later routes. It is by no means the best climb on the West Face of Low Man, but it does mark an extraordinary

technical breakthrough for its day, probably one of the hardest routes in Britain at the time, and suggests that Mallory might well have been capable of leading the notorious rock pitch that is the Second step of Everest's North Ridge, and which was estimated by Conrad Anker to be HVS to E1 in grade, though it has probably only ever been climbed with the aid of the Chinese ladder – unless of course Mallory did it! Personally I rather hope that that mystery forever remains a mystery.

Our new description reads:-

**\* North-West by West (Mallory's Route) 65m HVS 1913**

Long overlooked – an outstanding lead for its day. The first 15 metres are as for West Wall Climb. Follow the *West Wall Traverse* a few metres to a platform below a 3 metre wall.

1 40m (4b). A short crack leads to a grass rake. Cross this and make a hard start up a V-groove until it is possible to pull out right onto a sloping ledge. Traverse right and climb up behind a large block. Gain a V-groove above and then follow the prominent crack in the right wall to a fine pinnacle belay.

2 25m (5a). Step rightwards off the pinnacle and pull awkwardly up into a shallow lichenous groove (the right-hand of two shallow grooves above the pinnacle). Climb this (still awkward) to grass, then a corner on the right and so to the top.

G H L Mallory, A Goodfellow, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1913

### References

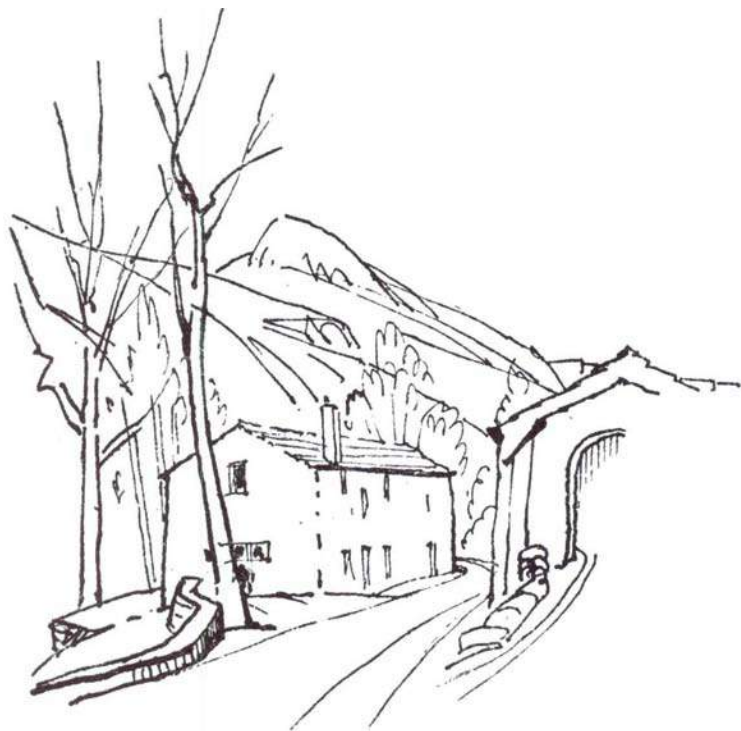
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 Letter to Alan Goodfellow from David Robertson (7<sup>th</sup> November 1961)  
 Letter to David Robertson from Alan Goodfellow (14<sup>th</sup> November 1961)

### Acknowledgements

I am most grateful to Mike Cocker for setting me off on such an intriguing enquiry. Ed Cross kindly lent me Harry Kelly's meticulously recorded climbing diaries that he inherited from his father Sid. I am most grateful too to Bill Ryan and Kelly Neff for putting me in touch with David Robertson's son Allan who very kindly supplied me with photocopies of his father's notes and correspondence with Alan Goodfellow. Finally, I am indebted to Phil Rigby for providing the fine photo-topo.

<sup>1</sup> The scratches were presumably those left by DG Murray, EB Beauman and JC Muir, during the first ascent of **Waterfall Climb** (D) during the Easter holiday of that year.

<sup>2</sup> The **West** in this case would mean the **Old West**, the Moderate scramble up the face between Low Man and High Man that is often used as a descent.



## LAKE DISTRICT CLASSIC ROCK CHALLENGE

*Nick Wharton*

Both fell running and climbing have long traditions of linking individual summits or routes to create a memorable challenge in the pursuit of pain and exhaustion. In addition to this is the ever more apparent fact that there are many activists who enjoy both climbing and running on the fells and you may start to see where the idea of a combined climbing/running challenge had its origins. The Lake District, whilst not claiming a monopoly, does have a long and proud tradition of both climbing and running, so what better place to provide a fulfilled day out for the climber who also runs, or the runner who also climbs.

What follows is a description of a tremendous example of such a challenge. A traverse of the 15 rock climbs in the Lake District to be found in Ken Wilson's Classic Rock, on foot, unsupported in under 24 hours. The aim of this article is to provide a description that will hopefully encourage others to attempt a repeat. I also hope to give some explanation for undertaking this *sufferfest* and some of the questions we tackled before setting out.

The route chosen to link all of these was just less than 40 miles going from south to north. It included approximately 16,000 feet of ascent on the fell and approx. 4000 feet on the rock. The team was simply myself and Brian Davison. Now Brian is barking mad! He is a remarkable climbing all-rounder who relishes a challenge more than most. Brian's winter and summer climbing achievements are extensive, yet to me it is his chalk, shale and his attraction for very long girdle traverses that are most impressive. Our last joint mis-adventure was to mountain bike 100 miles round the Lake District, starting and finishing in Kendal and visiting each of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club huts. This was a longer push and carry of a bike than anyone should have to endure. Brian subsequently went on to repeat this madness around the Scottish Mountaineering Club huts; first on a mountain bike, then on foot and then on a road bike.

The current list of Classic Rock routes had been linked in 24 hours in 1994 by Dave Willis, Tim Gould and Mike van Gullick, but with the inclusion of a car for two sections. Our challenge was to do this entirely on foot and without assistance. In doing this we shifted the emphasis of the challenge further in the direction of running and climbing, rather than just climbing.

In addition to running kit we took rock shoes, about 20 metres of 9mm rope, 5 wires, 4 slings and 4 karabiners (a normal Wharton/Davison rack some might say!). We also carried all food for the day – consisting of Wilf's flapjack and chocolate biscuits.

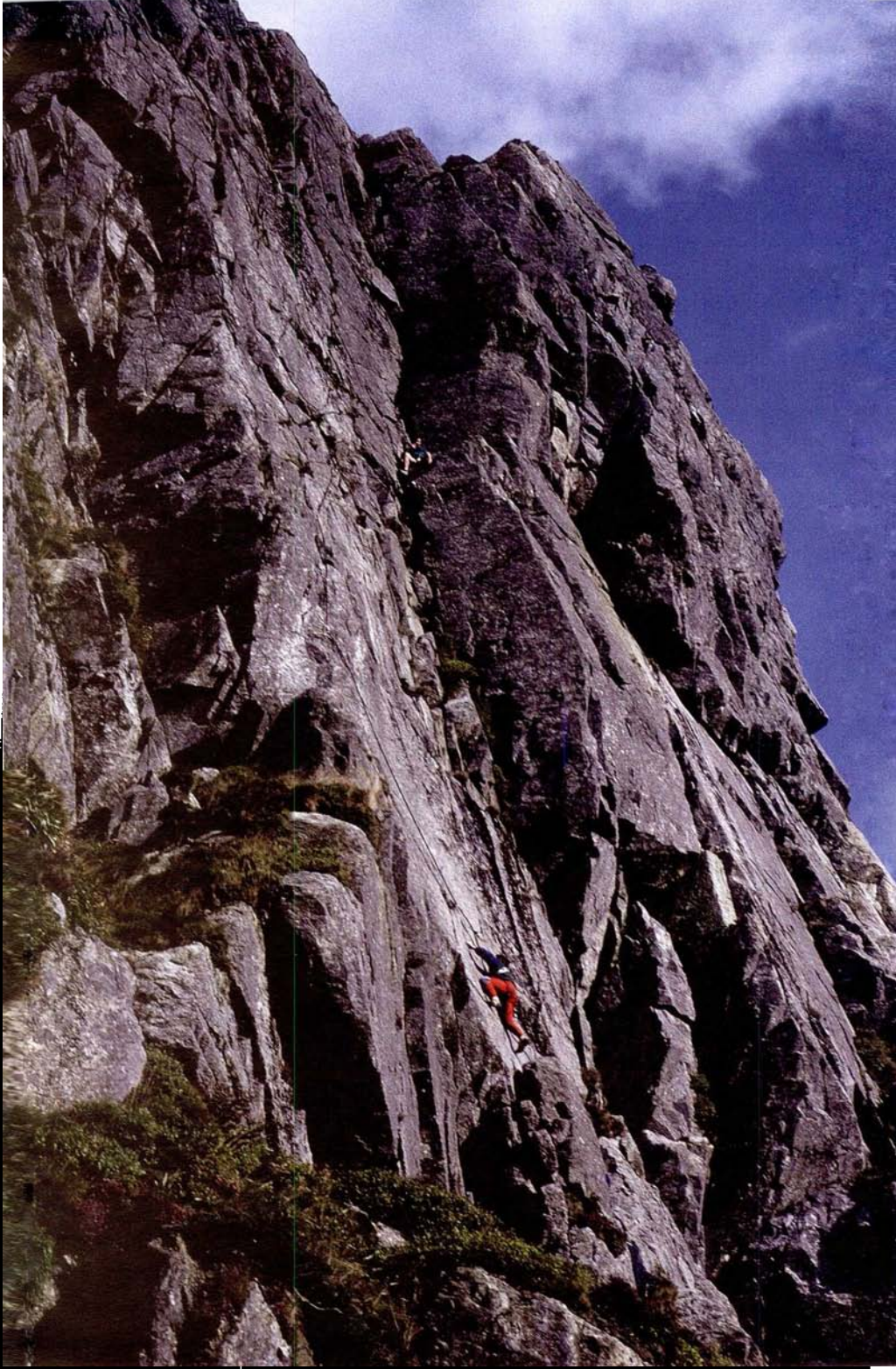
There were a lot of questions to settle beforehand. Route choice was of course central to success or failure. More taxing questions arose around the use

of support, though it was always going to be on foot. Why not have someone meet us with food and drink? What about someone with a rope for an abseil? Would it count if we down-climbed a route? How much equipment should we take? We chose to 'go-it-alone' and be entirely self-sufficient. Mainly because it was easier than trying to persuade someone else to spoil their day at our expense but it also seemed the right thing to do. This precluded any assistance with an abseil rope which would have been very handy on Gimmer in particular. We could have taken a full rope to abseil, but of course would have had to carry the extra weight along with harnesses, descender and more belay kit. The kit we did take was bare minimum yet still important. We did not want to fail for want of a little reassurance if we came across a patch of damp rock. With hindsight and particularly if we had done a more thorough recce, the rope was not necessary but I would still take what we did – just in case. The final decision was whether or not to down-climb some of the routes. In the end we considered it fair game as we will have still climbed all the routes. Just because all the first ascensionists were blinkered into starting at the bottom on each occasion did not mean we should be!

Having left a car in Borrowdale overnight, the fun started at the foot of *Murray's Route* on Dow at 0400 on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2005, a day that was later to become very hot indeed. However in the emerging daylight with the crag not surprisingly all to ourselves, we set off. Because of the dim light, and because we are both very careful, sensible chaps, we tied the 9mm rope round our waists and moved off together. Reaching the end of our first route part way up B Buttress we scrambled the rest of the way to the summit then ran down to Goat's Hause and up to join the last section of the Old County Tops race route to Wrynose pass and on to Langdale. The descent down to the Three Shires Stone was spectacular as the sun rose over the Eastern Fells and illuminated the pools of mist that sat over Little Langdale. The climb up to Gimmer was remarkably easy in the cool of the early morning and without the burden of a normal climbing rucksack. We linked *Ash Tree Slabs* with *C Route* before a time-consuming descent down the South East Gully to then return to the top via *Bracket and Slab*. A reverse solo of B&S would have saved a considerable amount time.

Next on the agenda was Bowfell. This is so close as the crow flies, unfortunately not having the flying ability of a crow there was a major route choice to be made. Would you choose to retain as much height as possible and traverse round the head of the valley beneath Rossett Pike, or take the much shorter direct line? We chose the latter so had to contend with the long drop into the valley and up the other side. It was now getting warmer. Bowfell Buttress, once we were there passed without incident, bathed in glorious morning sunshine. A traverse underneath Esk Pike to Esk Hause, reversing the Langdale race route, lined us up for the approach to Scafell. It must have been getting hot because I





remember thinking (for the first and possibly last time in my life) how good it was to see Scafell Crag in the shade. In fact we had chosen the day of the Wasdale fell race, a championship race this year, which saw an unprecedented number of runners drop out or be timed-out at checkpoints largely due to the debilitating heat. *Jones' Route Direct From Lord's Rake* has one tricky move for its grade but this soon yielded and a quick descent of Steep Ghyll with the assistance of our bit of rope saw us racing some other parties to the foot of *Moss Ghyll Grooves*. On the face of it, this was supposed to be the hardest route of the day. The guide certainly describes it so. In addition, I had not done it before and Brian had only done it in full winter conditions twenty years previously! Not knowing quite what to expect we tied on for the main pitch with the move out to the arête. Of course it was fine, and anyway I'm not altogether sure what use a 9mm rope tied round the waist would be.

We luckily escaped a cloud that suddenly engulfed Scafell by running down the corridor route to Styhead and on to the Napes for the finest route of the day - *Tophet Wall*. The exposure and big wall feel of the route combined with great climbing makes this one of the best outings in the District, especially at a grade that anyone can manage. We reversed down *Needle Ridge* then quickly up and down The Needle. Meanwhile a large family group were having a great time "Threading the Needle" - up one side of the gap and down the other.

Next came the nightmare section - the long slog out to Pillar passing some sorry looking runners on the Wasdale race. Apart from Stephen Reid and a few other committed devotees, Pillar doesn't see as many visitors as other, more local crags. Those who do make the effort will normally get a really early start and cram as much into the day as possible to make the long trek worthwhile. We had to run all the way out there in the middle of the day, do two routes and leave immediately. On arrival an energy gel did its magic and I was fired-up once more. We reversed *New West Climb* - very exciting at the start of the chimney pitch. At the bottom we met Steve Reid and Chris King climbing a new route *Rib and Rib* (E1). We made our apologies as we scrambled over Chris on a common section at the start of *Rib and Slab*. Once back on top we had the tedious return of the outward trip. We chose the obvious route past Black Sail Pass and along the north side of Kirk Fell and Gable to traverse underneath Green Gable and so on up to eventually reach the top of Gillercombe. The route *Gillercombe Buttress* does have some good climbing sections, but a lot between them. The crag also has quite a long descent route. Once again, a *reccé* of the route beforehand could have resulted in us choosing to down-climb and save more time. As it was, neither of us had even been near the crag before.

From Seathwaite of course it is just along the road, down Borrowdale. Let me say that again: "...it is just along the road..." You cannot imagine how

far along that road it is, especially at the end of a very long day, wearing fell shoes, with swollen feet in agony from having been repeatedly squashed into hot, sweaty rock shoes. I have no problem in admitting that I felt completely wasted on the approach up through the woods to Black Crag. But a remarkable thing happened on arrival at the crag, which might give some indication of the balance of the challenge between the running and climbing, for me at least. Having once more squeezed sore feet into rock shoes, as soon as I gingerly stepped onto the rock and started climbing I once again felt as fresh as if it were the first route of the day. The climb went easily enough despite the gathering gloom of dusk. By the time we had made the last, short dash along the valley and reached *Little Chamonix* it was completely dark and so the last route of the day was done by head torch. We topped-out at 2338 – a total of 19 hours and 38 minutes. Maybe it was the time of day or the dehydration, or maybe it was the lack of other supporters around, but at the end I felt considerably more exhausted than at the end of the Bob Graham round. It is also worth pointing out that Brian did an unsupported Bob Graham three weeks later and reported that he felt fresher at the end of that than after the Classic Rock challenge. With a degree of satisfaction, but lacking any great elation we just needed some relief from the still warm evening. We simply drove along to the lake shore and waded out into Derwentwater which was disappointingly shallow and not as cold as I had hoped.

It had been a tremendous day out with a great combination of the things I like doing best. The weather was always going to be challenging. If you want a clear day with maximum light it has to be the middle of summer and so will be hot. The alternative is an overcast, claggy day with risk of damp greasy rock – and anyway it is never like that in the Lakes.

There now appears to be many climbers who are also fell running, so here is a challenge for all of them. There is clearly scope to reduce the time between the crags and with more prior knowledge of the routes some time could be saved there too. It is well worth the effort, certainly a challenge that will stick in my mind for some time – at least until Brian comes up with some new way of making us suffer!

## A LAKELAND NASTY

Dedicated to '*Scorpion*'

*Leslie Shore*

Bentley Bectham brought Borrowdale's Shepherd's Crag to the attention of the climber, in the Nineteen Fifties. A long trail of them have since followed him to this sylvan idyll. They might now hear the croaks of its resident crows as signals of welcome. The birds have possibly acquired a liking for sweet things through foraging upon scraps of climbers' chocolate and Kendal mint cake. Yet to roost, and watch the snail-like pace of climbers explore every scalable foot of their estate, must have caused them to yawn. Indeed, they seem to me, to prefer to take wing out over Derwent Water in search of excitement. In so doing they have given at least the crags' climbing guides writers the freedom to become more intimate with the place than themselves. Moreover these select followers of Bectham have enjoyed a comparatively easy task producing route descriptions. So could not a relative newcomer to climbing, like myself in 1977, expect that they had made known all the difficulties of the crag's lower grade climbs?

My first buy in the Club's Climbing Guides to the English Lake District series was Borrowdale, published in 1968. Its cover comprised a thin sheet of transparent plastic protecting a blue page. I believe that the cover's construction was an innovation of the time. Its first page told me that J. Wilkinson was the climbing guides series editor. John Wilkinson had written an article in Mountain magazine, November, 1973, about a 'hundred and seventy-one years of explorations' of Scafell. This review had fired my interest in Lakeland rock and inspired my formative years as a rock climber. The book's title page informed me that P.J. Nunn and O. Woolcock were its writers, which impressed me since I had read about Paul Nunn's reputation as a climber. The crag diagrams, by Heaton-Cooper, were an invitation to explore the beauty of Nature. The final pages 'list of ascents' recognised the Abraham brothers as Borrowdale's pioneer climbers. Their workmanship convinced me that they had produced some kind of sacrosanct text.

My initiation into rock climbing began in Scotland. The rumour that I had heard among the Scots was that English climbers treated Scottish grading with much suspicion. Scottish patriots might have been pleased to know that their nation's climbing guide books had been written for an esoteric readership so deceiving an 'Old Enemy'. The Scottish climbers of the 1970s used a classification of route gradings derived for 'vibrans and dry conditions'. They apparently took strength from the reading of their guide book's route descriptions because they encouraged 'judgement due to [a deliberate] compromise between

extremes of vagueness and detail'. L.S. Lovat once wrote that such a principle: 'Sounds rather solemn, not to say grim. Yet I hope those using this Guide [Climbers Guide to Glencoe and Ardgour, SMC, 1964] will have as much fun as I had preparing it'. The Glencoe climber I found drew some joy from knowing that, partly as a result of the philosophy, there were Very Severe climbs masquerading as Severses. Surely this deception could not be expected from the fair-minded English.

When I lived in Paisley, west Scotland, Borrowdale was a logical, first destination for my introduction to the District's climbing. It was the crag nearest to the western end of Hadrian's Wall. It reputedly enjoyed better weather than the Highlands. Thus it was convenient to forget that its Seathwaite was the wettest place in England. The walks to its crags involved short strolls rather than exhausting missions to high crags above Scottish glens. A day's rock climbing time could be maximised. Yes, the valley verged on Eden.

In March 1977 I quizzed a work colleague, Andy Carlin, about his interest in a visit to Borrowdale. We had met months earlier over beers at Bisland's Bar in his native Paisley. Our paths had not crossed before in social life. My wife, Pamela, and I had adopted the place as our local pub. He and his mate Ronnie had stepped into the place for a round of drinks. Filled glasses in hand, they looked around for seats. Andy spotted spare chairs at our table, recognised me, and after a courteous question about their availability, they joined us for a friendly blether. During it I mentioned that I climbed and this caught Andy's interest. He was frank about his willingness to give the sport a try. I was nevertheless surprised when he agreed to my Borrowdale suggestion.

I thought it wise to cadge some climbing equipment for Andy just in case he did not take to the game. I had got to know Helen Copland through a member of the Starav Climbing Club, of which I was a member. She had a slender figure and, as a woman, she was then a rare Scottish rock climber. Her late father had also been a distinguished climber in a vintage generation of the Creagh Dhu Mountaineering Club. I guessed correctly that her PAs and climbing harness would fit Andy. A quarter of a century of climbing together has passed since and his frame has filled-out. I am certain that he could not fit comfortably into that harness today.

Our first climbing day was spent on Shepherd's Crag. It was a sunny, April's day. I had not anticipated peace and quiet. We had the crag to ourselves, maybe due to it having been the end of Easter week. We toured the routes on its Brown Slabs area before completing our first District 'plumb', *Little Chamomix*. It featured as the frontispiece photograph in a book, *Climber and Fellwalker in Lakeland* (1972) by Frank Monkhouse and Joe Williams, which I had on loan from Paisley public library. The photographer had certainly captured the adventure of its steep, final pitch. Although this composition has become hack-

neyed, its potential to thrill a newcomer to Lakeland rock climbing must have surely remained undiminished. The climb also gave us confidence in the judgement of Nunn and Woolcock for the grading of Very Difficult climbs.

We returned to Shepherd's Crag later that year's September to tackle our first Severe climb there, *Shepherd's Chimney*. The place was as busy as a fun-fair. We were with fellow members of the Starav Mountaineering Club which included Dick Cooper and Dougie Mullin. Our club's home ground was Glencoe. The Shepherd's challenge touted between some of the members was the soloing of routes. I crept away from them with a rope, and Andy. With the guide book open, I fumbled around the foot of the crag in search of the climb, mumbling out loud the words of the climb's description. The leaf-laden branches of trees whose trunks hugged the foot of the crag, screened the upper reaches of the crag from sight. A 'chimney' could not be seen. The start to the climb was chosen with some reservations.

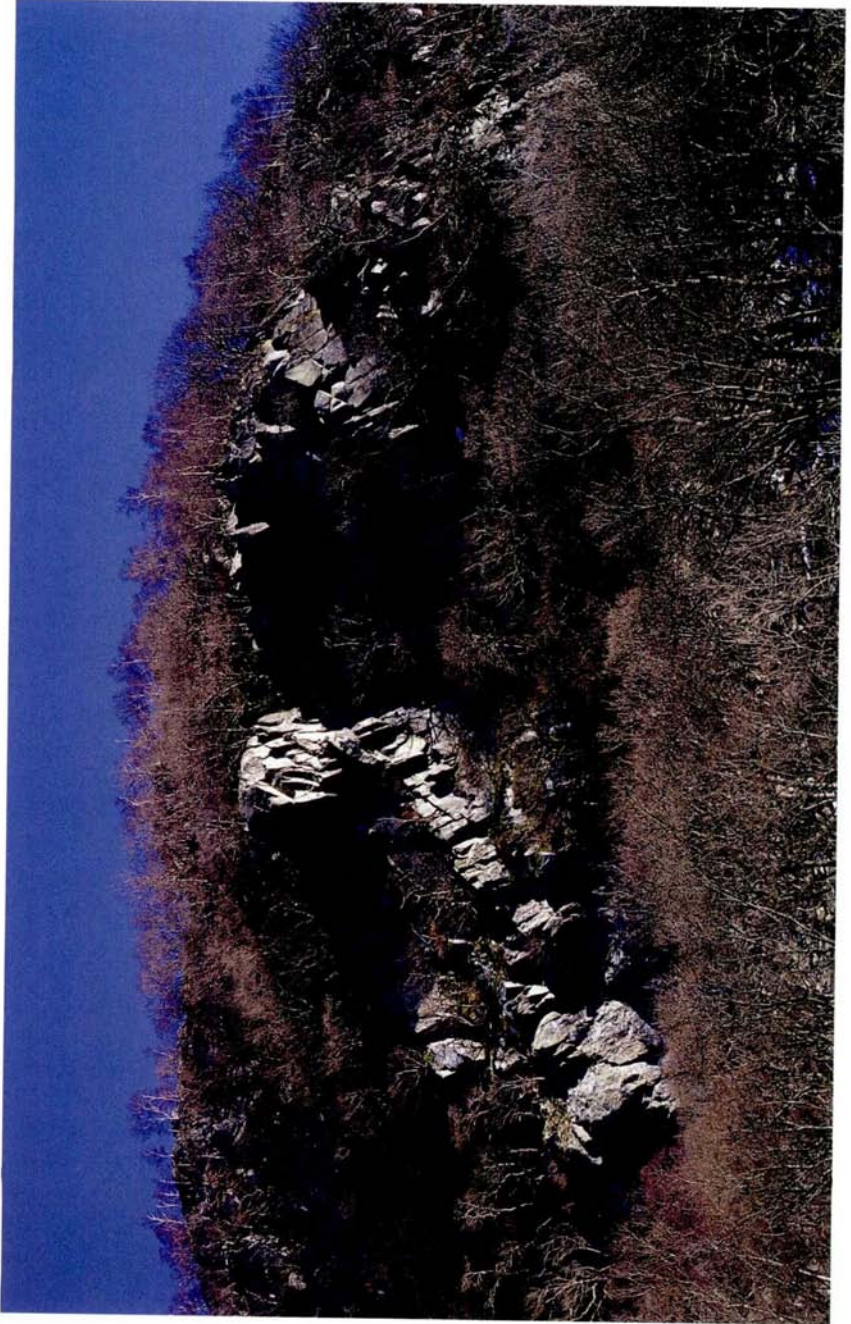
Andy belayed with my Viking nylon rope which had similarities with a hawser. The rope at his feet lay stiffly in figure of eight loops having defeated both our attempts to uncoil it into circles. A rope of kinks, like pegs on a washing line, hung from my waist as I led. After a run-out of sixty or so feet, I arrived at the foot of a short corner. It looked easy. My thoughts were instantly distracted by shouts from Dick. He was soloing up the way I had come in the trail of Dougie. They rapidly crowded in upon me and though they beckoned me to continue, I invited them to climb through.

Dougie tried the corner. His advance stopped. He was a man of few words and we heard a grunt of puzzlement. A smirk arose on Dick's face and he observed dryly that Dougie was having some rare difficulty. Some idea of Dougie's climbing ability has been recorded by Ron Kenyon in the 1990 Borrowdale guide in a reference to Mullins pioneering of *Widowmaker*, an E1 on Reccastle South Crag. A first ascents note observed: 'Climbed on the day after the Carlisle M.C. dinner and graded E3. Quite an achievement'. Dougie's pedigree asserted itself and so he advanced.

Dick stepped up to the breach. He was fresh from having done some first British ascent in the Dolomites. Standing at over six feet, his giant reach gave him the facility to haul himself out of many a difficulty. From a safe stance above the corner he glanced back at me and offered me a warning about what lay ahead.

I had a second encounter with the corner, many years later, as a pitch on the Very Severe *Rogue's Gallery*. The chances are that a novice Severe climber would not read up this route in the 1986 Armstrong and Kenyon Borrowdale guide. I think that if such a climber had done so, he or she, would have hesitated about making an attempt. The pitch had been graded technically at 5a. One other surprise for me was to discover that my memory had kept a false record of





my moves to the 'polished ledge'. My belief was that I had finished a waddle up the corner with a pull on my right hand. The hand having been secured, not as a grappling hook, but as an inverted fist jam in some similarly sized, open-vee groove, gouged in the ledge. I experienced a futile search for the groove.

On the first occasion, that Andy and I escaped from *Shepherd's Chimney*, Dick greeted us at the top of the cliff. Dougie had proceeded to solo down *Little Chamonix*. We gibbered as a chorus to him about having encountered a Lakeland Nasty. When we all gathered together later, at our cache of rucksacks, our talk about the corner's Severe manoeuvre gave rise to laughter. In my opinion it had proved to be something more than a crux. It had had the character of a booby-trap. On first acquaintance it looked a beguilingly easy problem. My reaction to the snap of its trap must have been panic. The improvised moves which had followed, in my rush to avoid a fall, were forgotten at the ledge with my shriek of relief. I shuffled away from Shepherd's Crag that day a much more wary a climber.

Yet Andy and I were destined to meet the menace of more Lakeland Nasties. Indeed a pattern developed. The Severe (hard) grade was discovered to be its most common habitat. Some climbers will mock this finding. They might even suggest that our experiences were either due to a lack of climbing ability, or that we were off form. Perhaps to avoid such humiliation, we have kept the Lakeland Nasty as our secret. Thus this confession of mine is a breach of confidence. It has also presented me with a dilemma: how far should my admission go? After all a full disclosure, of the whereabouts of Lakeland Nasties, would be a travesty of climbing as a sport for adventure. Some snippets from the Club's guide books, though, have conveniently helped me to limit my declarations.

*Intermediate Gully* on Dow Crag and *Samaritan Corner* on Gimmer Crag, Langdale, have been graded Severe (hard) for years. I had not bothered to buy a copy of Al Phizacklea's 1993 Dow guide before Andy and I came to climb *Intermediate Gully* in 1999. In Rob Matheson's write up in the 1984 Dow Crag guide of the route he commented that it was 'one of Lakeland's classic struggles, involving unsophisticated techniques'. We both enjoyed a relaxed frame of mind eyeing up the gully. The way upwards looked simple. Once again a miscalculation. Our bodies have never wriggled, or our arms thrashed as much, to get up a route before or since. It could be described as a session in a spin dryer. Sweat poured out of us due to centrifugal action. With Al Phizacklea's guide came both a concession, it was re-graded to mild Very Severe, and a reflection of George Bower's: 'It is more than just a climb. Its ascent is one of the solemn rites connected with the practice of a cult. Train on raw meat and stout, use bulldog buttons ...'.

*Samaritan Corner* was described in the Austin and Valentine 1973 Great Langdale guide as 'a companion route to *Asterisk*, but slightly easier'. I have



never enjoyed the early morning, dungeon-like chill, typically found in the confines at the foot of Gimmer's North-west face. Early one May day found Andy and I looking for an escape from the place to sunshine. He had raved on at me for some time about doing *Whit's End*, on the higher, West face. *Samaritan Corner* looked a temptingly simple way of approach. I climbed, speedily, upwards and warmth soon circulated around my body. My progress stumbled to a halt. Inspiration was needed to overcome a seemingly innocuous, chunk of rock. Its conquest sharpened me up for *Whits End*. Biden showed independence of mind with his Langdale guide of 1999. He disregarded the formidable judgements of his predecessors, such as Austin, Valentine, and Mortimer, to promote both *Samaritan Corner* and *Asterisk* to mild Very Severe. *Asterisk* was given a 4b technical grade and *Samaritan Corner* 4c!

Jerry Rooney, of the Starav Club, often brought a discussion about a day's climbing difficulties to a profound closure by saying, 'What's in a grade?'

As an Extreme climber it is doubtful whether he would ever have bothered with Shepherd's Crag's *Scorpion*. The first time I heard about this hard Severe climb was from the lips of a workshop foreman at Babcock Power's, Renfrew works, Clydeside. His experience of the climb was during an Outward Bound course in Lakeland. A day at Shepherd's Crag had introduced him to rock climbing. He had either impressed, or annoyed his instructors, since they picked him to follow them up the climb as a climax to the day. A special feature of John Wilkinson's series of guide books was a section which began: 'Visitors new to the district may find a list of recommended climbs useful'. *Scorpion* had not been picked for the Severe (Hard)/ Very Severe (mild) category. Perhaps I was blinkered by the recommendations, but I did not rush to do the climb. Although I must admit that I was troubled by the effect that it had had on the foreman. He did not climb again.

My curiosity eventually got the better of me, twelve years after my first visit to Shepherd's Crag. Andy and I kicked-off 1989's climbing year there in April. Our day began with *Derision Grooves* and *Fishers Folly*. We then elbowed our way into a melée, a continued sign of the popularity of *Little Chamonix*, and set up a ground belay. Our ascent of *Scorpion* began with our minds' thoughts set on its final pitch which the 1968 guide book described as: '65 feet. Climb the wall behind the belay, pass below a large projecting rock and up into a V-scoop by its left wall and ascend diagonally left to a small overhanging corner. Climb this to a good hold at the finish. An interesting finish'.

I led the pitch. The first sight of the small overhanging corner might have caused some heart beats to falter. Yet it became immediately apparent that an essentially simple move was the key to its ascent. However I realised also that the way upwards possessed a catch. The corner, say eight foot high, did have an overhanging gait, but was formed of slab-like rock, with an appearance

of cleaved slate. Nature's slater had done a first class job. There were no nicks for either the toes of the shoes to step on to, or the fingers to grip, before making a lunge to the good hold. Somehow I invented a manoeuvre that brought me to safety.

Andy can make up in the noise of conversation what he lacks in height. However he does have his silent moments. Cockermouth's Steve Hubball, was a new acquaintance of mine, thanks to the Club. Our rendezvous at the crag was accidental but it proved fortunate. He joined me at my belay position at a timely moment with a smile on his face. Andy stood below us at the foot of the corner. I imagined that he loitered with an intention: to chip a ladder of toe holds into the rock. Steve Hubball asked if I needed an extra pair of hands. Andy must have heard him since he fell into a deathly hush. Eventually a grizzle of a call came up to us for a tight rope. Andy joined us with a pluck on a perlon rope.

It is occasions like that which gain a climb notoriety. Some accounts linked to such climbs are exaggerations, whilst others are of doubtful truth. In late 1994 there was some hearsay at the Salving House, Rosthwaite, about *Scorpion*. Andy learnt from it that a pair of women climbers, one of which was a beginner, had recently met route finding problems on the climb. My climbing log book's note about the climb might grant to them some sympathy: 'The least polished Severe at Shepherd's - no wonder'. The tale which he related was about their dogged determination. They persevered all day, calling a halt when an Autumnal dusk gathered but with no success. Of course only the crag's crows, impatient at having to wait to roost for the night, might have been the eyewitnesses of their trials.

Andy had a vested interest in the gossip. He had become a guardian of a legend. *Scorpion* had suffered at the hands of Nature. During an earlier winter there had been a rock fall at Shepherd's which 'has affected the final moves' (Baum & Hewison, Borrowdale, 2000,). This had brought him some fame. He now represented a yard-stuck for climbers wanting to know if they would have been tall enough to complete the original climb, put up by G.B.Fisher and R.Richardson in 1952. Maybe one day his stature will attract the interest of these two women climbers so that they can gauge if they enjoyed the advantage of height. Sadly though, they and many other climbers, will now be deprived of the experience of such a great Lakeland Nasty. The specie though thrives elsewhere in the District and one of them might even possess a memorable 'sting in the tail'.

## MOUNTAIN MEMORIALS

*Doug Elliott*

We all use mountains in our own ways, and we all find our own ways of justifying what we do. I want a sense of contentment from my surroundings with feelings of enjoyment, satisfaction and well-being in myself. I am wary yet fully aware that some purport to conquer mountains, they go into battle, they wage war, they expect to face danger, and for the greater rewards they continue harder and higher – and presumably take greater risks. I cannot subscribe to Nietzsche-type assertions that facing death is the way to a richer life. I want to be safe and therefore opt for calculated judgements and controlled risk – and I try to avoid metaphorical mumbo-jumbo. However, in as much as war and dying are concerned, the reliance on mountains for war memorials and commemorations cannot be denied; and indeed, these uses are to be applauded.

Memorials offer conventional and acceptable solutions when searching for tangible reminders of events, or when seeking means to manifest and express sentiments towards individuals. Perhaps a mania with memorials may be linked to the spiritual dimension of mountains as asserted by many. To the East mountains may be the birthplace of religions or abodes of gods, and even the embodiment of gods themselves. Here in the West it is not uncommon for the grandeur and isolation of mountains to be compared to the fleeting and insignificant presence of man, with mountains perceived as places for men to interconnect with powers greater than themselves, to experience revelations, to achieve enlightenment, and to be granted peace. Certainly there is a mental component to mountaineering, and in positive manner it is widely claimed that mountain surroundings enable matters to be put into perspective. In general terms I confess to feeling comfortable with this, and over the years I have used the Lakeland fells as a source of solace.

On many occasions I have paused at the remnants of a Halifax bomber that came to grief in 1944 just a few feet from safety on the summit of Great Carrs. Sometimes there would be poppies or other Remembrance Day items; usually there was a brief note, wrapped in plastic and pinned to a wooden cross, detailing the accident and loss of life; but often there was nothing except a few pieces of aircraft wreckage and the wooden cross protruding from a cairn. In the comfort of my bed I learned from the early news on Radio Cumbria that at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 2005 there was to be a dedication and unveiling of a permanent memorial plaque to the seven Canadian and one Scottish crew members who were killed due to navigational failure in bad weather.

Over sixty years on from this tragic wartime disaster, in retelling the story, Radio Cumbria also sounded weather warnings with fearful forecasts of

trees likely to be uprooted and suspected structural damage. In addition to compassionate concern, dedication of a new memorial plaque presented a target for my cardio-vascular exercise – I decided to go – it was not particularly cold, and the way from Coniston via Levers Water, Prison Band and Swirl How would be obvious even in the low cloud. The wind was gale force and gusting, but I arrived about ten minutes early, having met only one other taking the same approach as me, and two characters sheltering at the scene who had battled along from Wrynose Pass. In the time it took to struggle to the nearby summit of Great Carrs and return to the site of the memorial about two dozen hardy souls arrived from the Wrynose direction, including the Vicar of Coniston, a Colonel of the Royal Canadian Air Force, and a variety of Services personnel. There was a simple ceremony, a bugler contributed a rather ragged rendition of the Last Post, a two minute silence was observed, and the Reveille was blown away on the wind. Atrocious weather conditions added to the poignancy of the experience.

Initial contemplation was of my father who served in RAF Bomber Command in the Second World War, but then I thought of other memorials on our Lakeland fells, and in particular of those associated with the Fell & Rock. Details and descriptions are strewn throughout Club journals, and a characteristic to be commended is the observing of sombre and serious situations with dignity and generosity, as well as the ability to conduct happy and hilarious commemorations of such events as a fiftieth anniversary ascent of Napes Needle or centenary celebrations on Pillar Rock. These qualities of the Club are complementary rather than contradictory, as demonstrated by one of the earliest of the Fell & Rock's memorials – the erection of Robinson's Cairn marking the High Level Route to Pillar Rock.

Initially John Wilson Robinson was a fell wanderer and explorer, but he was present at the birth of rock-climbing and established a fine record of First Ascents, from which any list of his climbing companions must read like a roll of honour. J. W. Robinson was a founder Vice-President of the Fell & Rock, and after a lifetime of fitness and strenuous activities it was a shock when he died unexpectedly in 1907 due to an "internal malady". A year later Robinson's Cairn was erected by "one hundred of his comrades and friends" as a lasting monument but with happy memories. No less person than Walter Parry Haskett-Smith chaired the Memorial Committee, served by illustrious members including Cecil Slingsby, Norman Collie and George Abraham. With tremendous team spirit and temper the cairn was "raised" at Easter 1908, but typical of many building projects the plaque was not ready – it had to be fixed later in the year. J. W. Robinson was no stranger to memorials as in August 1906, on the same day as he made his one hundredth ascent of Pillar Rock, he arranged for a stone mason to carve the initials 'JJ' and date '1878' to mark where the body of



Above: Great Carrs

Photo: Doug Elliott

Below: Great Gable

Photo: Doug Elliott



PELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB



IN GLORIOUS & HAPPY MEMORY OF THOSE  
 WHOSE NAMES ARE INSCRIBED BELOW  
 MEMBERS OF THIS CLUB WHO DIED FOR  
 THEIR COUNTRY IN THE EUROPEAN WAR  
 1914-1918 THESE PELLETS WERE ACQUIRED  
 BY THEIR FELLOW MEMBERS & BY THEM  
 VESTED IN THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR  
 THE USE & ENJOYMENT OF THE PEOPLE  
 OF OUR LAND FOR ALL TIME:-  
 U.S. BAINBRIDGE; J. G. BEAN; H. S. P. BLAIR;  
 A. J. CLAY; W. N. FLETCHER; W. H. G. GROSS;  
 E. HARTLEY; S. W. HERFORD; G. E. JEFFCOATE;  
 E. G. LEE; S. J. LINZELL; L. A. OPPENHEIMER;  
 A. P. PRICHARD; A. M. RIMER; F. H. SANDERSON;  
 H. L. SHINGOBY; G. S. TURNER; B. HEWITT;  
 H. R. WRIGHT WORTH; C. S. WORTHINGTON

Reverend James Jackson was found after he perished when about to make what would have been a third ascent of the Rock by this 'Patriarch of the Pillarites'.

Another event coming to mind as I stood before a cairn and relics of war was a celebration in 1919 on the summit of Scafell Pike. This was undertaken after an official request by the national Peace Celebration Beacons and Bonfires Committee. The individual generally credited as founder of the Fell & Rock, Edward Scantlebury, was again a prime mover, and his report of preparations using ponies to transport flares and bonfire material together with descriptions of the celebrations are chronicled in a contemporary journal. This is another example of combining humour and humility with an account of how after fixing the flagstaff, but forgetting the flag, the pole had to come down again so the Union Flag could be nailed to the mast. Then "A cheer rang out from the assembled throng, and immediately the Union Jack floated out over the summit of England the mist began to clear. Just as, when Britain with the help of our her Allies had conquered her enemies, the mists of war, which obscured the beauty of life, began to slowly roll away, making life the sweeter by contrast with the evil which had passed".

At this time the Fell & Rock resolved to advance some material and lasting tribute to honour members lost in what was then simply 'The Great War'. To me the real memorial is the purchase and gift to the 'Public' of the fells of the Wasdale and Borrowdale watersheds including Great Gable, but this is sometimes less obvious than a bronze tablet<sup>1</sup> at Gable's summit incorporating a relief map, words of dedication, and a Roll of Honour for twenty Fell & Rock members who died for their country. About five hundred gathered on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1924 to witness unveiling from beneath a war stained flag from the Battle of Jutland and to pay homage in what must have been a most moving service. The Fell & Rock can be justly proud of how it commemorated the fallen, and also for securing the fells as stated by then President Arthur Wakefield "for us and our children for ever".

The Fell & Rock also lost members in the Second World War, but it appears that initially there was some antipathy against memorials. An opportunity arose in the late 1950s due to disrepair and disintegration of the Forestry Commission bridge over the River Liza on the track from Scarth Gap to Pillar Rock. Negotiations and fundraising were protracted but productive and eventually an elegant new footbridge was erected in 1959. A ceremony of inauguration on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1960, chosen as the anniversary of 'VE Day', was a more simple affair than for Great Gable but depth of feeling was equally sincere. A plain plaque refers to the memory of Fell & Rock members who fell in the World War of 1939-1945, and the then President, Harry Spilsbury, expressed a wish that "many would pause before the plaque which could serve as a constant reminder of the folly of war as well as the sacrifice of those men whom it commemorated

who, like ourselves, had found in the hills and on the rocks a source of recreation and inspiration”.

Some may see parallels to the folly of war with my return from the Great Carrs memorial over Swirl How becoming a ferocious fight against the wind – gale ratcheted up to hurricane. Conditions eased as I retreated downwards but reinforcements of rain roared into the attack. I did not view the weather as an enemy but it prompted the perennial question – why do we do it? I reminded myself that physical participation provides a frame of reference and of mind to mull over mental issues and perhaps spark some spiritual insight. I continued to ponder on a variety of individual memorials and commemorative plaques throughout the Lake District. Members of the Fell & Rock will be acquainted with many of these ranging in size but not scope of sadness from the plaque on Castle Crag in memory of “Men of Borrowdale” who died for their country in The Great War, to gifting of the Scafells by Lord Leconfield as a war memorial to the nation’s fallen. Some are perhaps less well known like the recessed cross and epigraph relating to a horrendous accident in 1903 on Scafell Pinnacle; or the plaque below Birkness Combe recalling a devastating disaster experienced by the Cocker mouth Mountain Rescue Team in 1969. Some are almost completely unknown and have been short-lived like a panel of excellence, and no doubt expense, that was fixed to the trig. pillar on Coniston Old Man. This appeared briefly a few years ago, it referred to Arthur Ransome, and I have no idea whether its demise was due to officialdom, literary critics, or vandals.

Everyone who has approached Helvellyn via Striding Edge will have passed at least three of what penman Wainwright refers to as ‘Monuments’, one of which was replaced a few years ago. Alfred Wainwright’s guidebooks are his memorial, but he himself arranged for his ashes to be scattered on one of his favourite fells – Haystacks. I have played a part in gatherings to scatter ashes of friends on fell tops, and though in no hurry, my own predilection is for Dow Crag. Often I come across intimate and transient tributes, normally flowers, presumably left in memory of loved ones. There are small scale salutes to individuals attached overtly to benches or mountain rescue boxes, and I know of concealed and confusing cases such as the SHG epitaph on Dow Crag<sup>2</sup>.

There are others, and I understand that in Scotland, fearing a proliferation of mountain memorials, removal action is underway, starting at the summit of Ben Nevis. I am more sangfroid, even sanguine, about reliance on the Lake District as a sanctum. I believe the Fell & Rock can be proud of its altruistic contributions to mountain memorials with enterprises carried out in noble spirit without regard to prestige other than honouring the dead and prompting the living to reflect. My own contemplations and convictions echo the sentiments expressed at unveiling ceremonies, and I sympathise with many using the fells to focus loving and admiring recollection, recognition and respect. Emotions

can run high with mountains encouraging empathy, as acknowledged by the likes of me as I take advantage of the natural environment for escape and to counterbalance stresses, strains and struggles of everyday life. Mountains provide sanctuary and their manipulation for memorials is self-evident. The cognoscenti understand. Those dealing in maudlin metaphors; or demanding philosophical purpose; or feeling compelled to challenge and question – they won't make sense of any answers.

<sup>1</sup> Reference to B. H. Witty on the Great Gable memorial is incorrect and the name should be B. H. Whitley. The name Benj. Heywood Whitley is included on the 'market cross' war memorial in Ulverston, and he was a member of the Fell & Rock at the same time as Basil Howard Witty. Their initials are the same but their ranks and regiments could be confused; Whitley as 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. in the Royal Scots and killed in action on the Somme; and Witty as Lieut. in the Royal Engineers but involved in training at Aldershot. There has also been confusion over a number of Alan Craig's group photographs where the identity of an 'unknown' member has been suggested as B. H. Witty, but surely it is more likely to be local Ulverston companion B. H. Whitley? As far as the Gable memorial is concerned action is in hand to set the record straight by removing previous lettering and replacing with a weathered bronze insert to match existing.

<sup>2</sup> See Peter Fleming's following article in this Journal concerning S.H.G's inscription

#### Editors' Note

After the appalling weather on Friday 11 November 2005 for the Great Carrs ceremony, two days later, on Remembrance Sunday, the Lake District basked in cold clear Autumn conditions. Over five hundred people went to the summit of Great Gable and Paul Exley took the opportunity to take the 360 degree panoramic photograph shown with this article.



## SLINGSBY'S PINNACLE – AN ENIGMA

*Peter Fleming*

Sometime in the early 1960s whilst scrambling around within the darker recesses of Dow Crags, I first came across an inscription carved in the rock on the upper west side of Slingsby's Pinnacle. After cleaning off the coating of lichen it was possible to make out the initials SHG. On the second line beneath were the Latin words "AVE VALE" followed by a date "1905-11".

My interest was rekindled when I returned there recently with Mark Scott. We assumed the initials were those of Sholto Hamilton Gordon, a founder member of the FRCC. His name will always be remembered from the excellent route named after him on the nearby "A" Buttress Gordon and Craig's Route which he pioneered in September 1909.

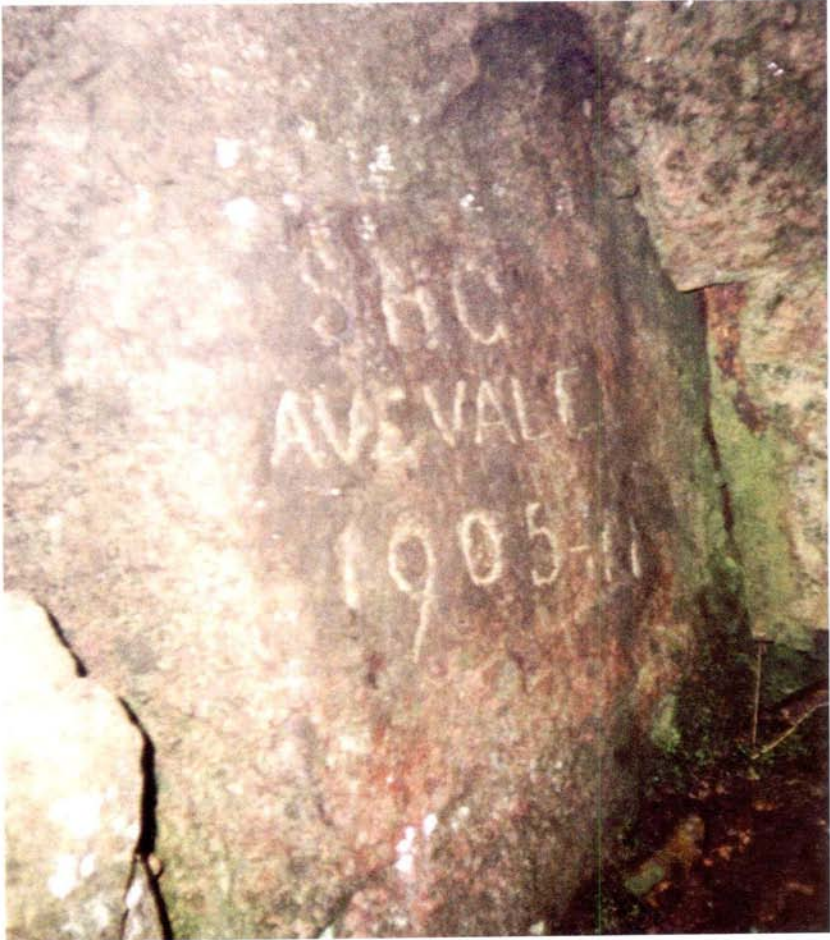
The second line "AVE VALE" translates as "Hail and Farewell", but it was the date which puzzled us. Was the "11" meant to be November? If so this would pre-date the official formation of the Club by exactly 12 Months. By coincidence, according to the entry on the first page of the Coniston Climbing Book (1906-26), originally kept at the Sun Hotel, Coniston, but now in the Club Archives, the first meet of the Club was held at the Sun Hotel in Coniston on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 1906. However on page 65 of the Climbing Book an entry dated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1912 states that G. H. Charter and J. P. Rodgers visited Dow Crags and Slingsby's Pinnacle. They recorded that "on the North West face of which, near the top was found cut in the rock 'S.H.G. Ave Vale' evidently to the memory of S.H. Gordon. Who put it there?"

It appears, even in 1912, there was a mystery as to who was the sculptor. In addition there was no mention of a date, which suggests that this was added later.

S. H. Gordon lived in Barrow-in-Furness. His great friend and companion on the crags and fells was Alan Craig from nearby Ulverston. It is recorded in the Coniston Climbing Book that they both set out for Dow Crags from the Sun Hotel twice in November 1906, on both occasions in bad weather, but no reference to them visiting Slingsby's Pinnacle can be found.

If the inscription "-11" can be regarded as being the year 1911 instead of the month of November it could possibly have an answer. In the FRCC Journal Vol. II, page 248, is a memoir written by Alan Craig who says "The Club has suffered an irreparable loss in the death on 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 1911 by accident, of one of its founders, and perhaps its keenest member, S. H. Gordon". He was thirty one years old.

The nature of the accident is not revealed, but could Alan Craig be the author of the inscription on Slingsby's Pinnacle. There is also the question of



the significance of the year 1905. Was it the year Sholto Hamilton Gordon began climbing? And why the apparent time lag before the dates were added?

Does anyone know the answers?

## A KENTMERE ROUND

*Al Churcher*

The Kentmere Round is a twelve to fourteen mile circular ridge walk – depending on whether or not you take in High Street – which takes its name from the village that provides its starting point. The ridges between the eight 2,000ft summits are generally grassy and reasonably angled (with enough crags on one side or the other for a feeling of ruggedness and exposure). Add their reputation for holding snow, and the round is an obvious challenge for a ski-tour on Nordic skis.

We were both more-or-less novices at langlauf (ski-de-fond, Nordic, or cross-country skiing, whichever you prefer). Jim had thrashed around a little on the moors around Sheffield, and I'd been taking advantage of that remarkable winter with some evening expeditions across the local golf-courses, (major objective dangers – hidden bunkers and shin-high chains across the greens). But for this trip we'd hired pukka steel-edged skis from Kendal, although the boots were of the rubbery and extremely flexible 'polyflex' variety. Hardly ideal for a mountain traverse, particularly in icy conditions; but with ice-axes on our sacs, and 'proper' boots inside them we were well prepared for the parts we couldn't ski – and we knew there'd be plenty of those.

We left the village on a perfect Alpine morning – a clear blue sky, no wind, and the higher ground well covered in sparkling white. A pleasant stroll up to the Garburn Pass, and on with the skis. A deep drift of soft snow followed a wall in the right direction and our fish-scales were soon sliding gently upwards towards the beginning of the ridge, and then on to Yoke, the first peak on our list. It looked easier to traverse this to the east, but being purists we took off our skis and walked up to bag the top. That was our first mistake – on the other side the snow was wind-glazed with a surface reminiscent of a mangled wash-board, and our ski-descent to rejoin the traverse line was painfully (literally) slow. A typical climber's downhill technique is to point the skis downwards, yell something suitably macho and go – picking up speed until you hit something, fall over, or the bottle runs out and you sit down. Now this works fine on soft snow, but on two week-old glazed névé, complete with ice-ferns which sometimes became six-inch crystals thicker than Desperate Dan's thumb, it's asking a lot from both the seat of your pants and what's inside them. Jim replaced the yells with a hunch of the shoulders and a grimly determined expression, but in other respects it's a fair description of his technique. My downhill experience gave me a slight edge here – I was rarely able to effect a turn, but I could generally manage to snow plough enough to select

the softer parts to sit down on when the speed became too great, or the surface ahead too intimidating.

After Ill Bell the ice patches became more continuous, and despite our steel edges and the comparatively gentle slopes we were traversing, we found ourselves fighting to stay on our feet. It was when removing my skis after a particularly painful fall that I almost lost one, and when Jim's next 'crater' resulted in a twenty yard slide, we decided enough was enough. At this point we would have happily swapped our skis for crampons, for it was only when we stopped to change our boots and strap our skis on to the sacs that we realised just how much we'd been relying on our edges to stop ourselves from sliding away. So far the slopes below had been reasonably innocuous, but the recommended traverse around the side of Froswick was a narrow strip above a steeper, craggier drop, and it was with some relief that we took off our ice-axes and kicked up to the summit.

As we'd gained height the clear Alpine light had given way to thickening, swirling mist, and crossing the great whale-backed slope to the west of the summit of Thornthwaite Crag we were forced to take a bearing for the top of High Street. Heads down we trudged on mechanically; we'd been following the heavily rimed fence for some minutes before we realised that we could be skiing. We were loath to make the effort of changing our boots, but it was worth it. A strip of windblown snow had collected against the fence, and instead of breaking through it every few steps we were soon sliding smoothly over it.

Looking back, Jim was almost lost in the mist, the perfect excuse for a downhill run which lasted all of a minute. But both the gradient and the snow were perfect for the long skating strides that must eat up the miles when technique and conditions come together. Turning round we seemed to be following my tracks for at least ten times as long, but over a slight rise we came in sight of the trig-point and turned our skis for Mardale Ill Bell. The downhill slope was gentle enough to allow us to ski on a bearing, although as the gradient steepened and the snow returned to its former state of icy crud we were forced to make a series of traverses, frequently punctuated by sudden stops as an edge caught on one of the myriad icy encrustations built up by the wind on the underlying rocks. The cloud was slowly lifting, and by the top of Mardale Ill Bell we could pick out our route down to the pass of Nan Bield, although it took a series of yells from me and an emergency sitting brake from him to avoid a record-breaking descent down to Small Water as the rounded slopes were transformed to the steep crags that rim the col.

In the mist of High Street we had decided to drop down from Nan Bield into Kentmere Valley – we were later than expected and a blind traverse of the ridge of Harter Fell held little attraction, especially with the likelihood of hav-



ing to find our way off in the dark. But as the clouds disappeared, the sight of the long white ridge outlined against a pure blue sky made us think again. OK, so it was already after 3.30, but we could be up Harter Fell by four, and even if we had to walk all of the two miles or so of ridge over Kentmere Pike we could surely be off it before dark; then it would just be a question of following a track to the road, and we had headtorches.

The decision made, we changed boots and kicked down the steep snowslope to Nan Bield. A ski in each hand made a good substitute for axe and crampons, and we were soon marvelling at the snow-sculptures surrounding the summit of Harter Fell. Nearing the top the wind had scoured the snow away around a line of frozen dog prints, leaving a row of colons on a page of snow. Old ski tracks were left suspended like railway lines after an earthquake, but the *pièce de résistance* of this icy extravaganza was the fence delineating the line of the ridge. The prevailing wind had built up the ice on the squared mesh to such a depth that it resembled nothing less than a continuous wine-rack stretching on into the distance. And it was this ridge that made the day; that transformed it from a winter walk with a bit of skiing thrown in, to a real taste of what a ski-tour of the fells can offer. For a continuous strip of delicious drifted snow followed the entire length of the fence – snow fretted and carved by the wind, blown out into great pointed spurs, or split by mini-crevasses – but always skiable snow, and our whoops of exhilaration must surely have been heard in Windermere as we flew down to Kentmere Pike and on towards Goat Scar. By now a great red sun was sinking slowly behind Ill Bell, and our shadows were those of giants striding over flamingo feathers.

Below Kentmere Pike the narrow strip of skiable snow became both icier and steeper, with a corresponding increase in speed and falls. Luckily I soon discovered that sitting on the backs of my skis with my backside scraping the snow between them, reduced both the distance to fall and the maximum speed attainable to less fearsome proportions.

We took our skis off for the last time, climbed over the stile and followed the path that leads diagonally downwards below Goat Scar. Having once expected failure, the successful completion of the whole round was that much the sweeter, and as a sliver of crescent moon came up on our left, the glowing line of pink behind Yoke, Ill Bell and Froswick mirrored the glow we felt inside.

## THE BROTHERS

A term of derision for describing artisans

*Oliver A Geere*

At the request of the younger generation I prepared a potted account of certain teenage events whilst resident in what is now Cumbria. I share this herewith as I remember with fondness and gratitude parental care that smoothed the fiery paths of youth and made my initial wanderings possible. Recollections are centred on my early days in the Lake District spent mainly with my shipyard brothers.

Mum always used to tell the tale that her brother Alf (after who I was named) had a youthful habit of disappearing walk-about in the city of London, to the consternation of the deeply religious Andrews clan who used to unite in prayer for his safe return. The sound of a tin can being kicked along the street thereafter was the usual notification of the wanderer's return! Dad who had a scholastic bent – and in his youth was head-boy of Capland Street L.C.C. School – was at one stage linked to the Scout movement and hence into organized camping which I gratefully acknowledge.

The wartime years saw our family evacuated to Arnside in Westmorland where Dad's firm Libby, McNeil & Libby Ltd. had Ministry business centred on Milnthorpe. The initial culture shock of transition from Essex was severe and I recall crying for my Hornby train set of all things. However, life goes on and having settled down at the local school which included bee-keeping and swimming on the prospectus as well as playing host to evacuees from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, my time passed rapidly enough until secondary education took me to Lancaster.

Arnside – now classed as an area of outstanding natural beauty – was a grand place to grow up. I reached the dizzy heights of patrol leader in the Curlews, camped on and roamed on the Knott at all hours of the day and night, star gazing on frosty nights or watching the silvery ribbon of the Kent estuary ebb and flow. No artificial light pollution in those days; for these were black-out years when public enemy No. 1 was blasting Barrow-in-Furness, occasionally leaving his calling card with us nearer home.

The Lake District being out of bounds for YHA junior members, most of my wanderings further afield were concentrated on the Yorkshire Dales, though brother Bill and I did one marathon – never since surpassed by us – of a forty mile round trip to Barbondale near Dent. I did get to the Lake District, and trusting it will not be considered 'waffle' I must relate striking out in thick mist from Garburn Pass for Patterdale, when on the summit of Froswick the mist dispersed leaving me with my very own Spectre of the Brocken for company.



Of all nature's freaks this was only surpassed once, when on Dow Crag I gazed in awestruck wonder at the brilliant spectacle of the Northern Lights pulsating across the sky.

Before taking up employment at Barrow shipyard I bumped into two of my erstwhile Cove Hut companions, Alf Mullan and Roy McDonald twice. The first meeting was in Dunnerdale and the second in Ennerdale, when they took me up Alpha Route on Green Gable. Our third get-together was as fully fledged members of the Cove Hut crowd which was the subject of an excellent article in the 2000 Fell & Rock Journal. A well known character at the time was 'Ginger' Cain. It would not be disloyal to youthful friendship to remark that the late Jim Cameron - Coniston's famed mountain guide - when observing Ginger's prowess on Dow Crag observed, "That lad will either kill himself or become a brilliant climber". In the event he - Ginger - mellowed in later life to become an artist of considerable talent.

Although my mates' parochial instincts were strong, we did spread our charms around the district and generally started at the climbs of least difficulty. As our present public may well understand with current practice and protection it is no longer considered a crime to 'peel off', whilst abseiling is 'old hat'. Of the classic routes, the North Climb on Pillar Rock may well serve as one of my joys of climbing. Don Atkinson and I arrived at the 'stomach traverse', a right angled corner in an apparently hold-less wall with escape limited to either retreat or negotiating a crack gently angled to the higher ground. The trick is to insert the left leg into the fissure and squirm like mad for the exit, the right leg being redundant. The amazing thing is that having grasped the final hold, the airy perch gives way to easy grass ledges. It does however place an intolerable strain on one's trouser buttons. The subsequent pitches of the 'split blocks' and the 'nose' are stuff of legend and horror for some. Our problem came later, when debating the lateness of the hour, it was decided to slide down the rope seventy feet into Jordan Gap. Subsequent experience has taught us a proper abseil or a scamper down Slab and Notch Route would have better served. We missed the night train home from Drigg and I had time off work with badly blistered hands.

Wasdale is of course the Mecca of all serious climbers' intent, and accommodation was normally at Down-in-the-Dale barn courtesy of the Naylor family who farmed there. One had to be careful not to sleep on the lowest bench of cut bracken lest late revellers trample on you or worse. Dow Crag was my obvious destination at the southern end of the Lake District, but from Wasdale there was access to Scafell, Great Gable and Pillar.

Of the changes and chances of this mortal life, two tragedies left their mark on those early carefree days. The joint discovery with the RAF of a crashed air ambulance on Broad Crag and the recovery of the bodies earned



official recognition. The other was a young couple who fell to their deaths in Needle Gully, Great Gable. Since I was the lone witness of this tragic event it affected me deeply, so duty done in the subsequent carry to Borrowdale, I made tracks for home to be consoled by nature's intended counselling service – loving parents. Fifty years later by chance I was reunited with one of the deceased's climbing companions. He showed me his friends' joint grave in Stonethwaite churchyard, each of us lost in thought of what could have been.

Inevitably the Cove Hut crowd's thoughts turned to travel further afield, and Scotland was then of course the only option. Being a fledgling apprentice my difficulty was raising the rail fare. Our elder brethren were understandably on a higher rate of pay. Shipyard holidays (shut down) usually involved a mass exodus north of the border and a kindly works labourer told me he was organising a return trip to Glasgow for half the rail fare. Having accepted, the upshot was that I arrived in the city turned midnight, so having nowhere to barnstorm I sought the aid of the local constabulary who put me in gaol for the night! The cell door was unlocked at 5 am with a cup of tea and a cheery Glaswegian farewell. It was not until I reached Fort William some hours later that I discovered my shipyard workmates had ballasted my rucksack with scrap iron.

How can one do justice to the magic of the Highlands? This was the first of many visits to Scotland and I have fond memories. It is almost impossible not to rabbit on about the merits of climbing in Skye, the mountain gabbro of the Black Cuillin – for which the anglicised shipyard expression for shoddy workmanship is most appropriate – “it's as rough as a bear's bottom”, and hence nearly impossible to fall off! However I recall the basaltic intrusions as being friable – and they had to be handled with caution. Another memory is the last decent scree run of my life down the stone chute of Sgurr Alisdair. Not necessarily in ordered sequence it would be remiss of me not to mention Ben Nevis where Don Atkinson, having had the misfortune the previous Easter of an uncontrolled slide down one of its main gullies and surviving, was judged sufficiently hardy to lead the party en route. However, once in sight of the crags of the mighty Ben, the lads were off like rats up a drainpipe, leaving Don and I to rope up at the foot of Observatory Buttress and painstakingly proceed in orthodox manner to the top – we did not lead thro' like the others! In the event, they had a long wait at the top; and were debating whether to descend to our assistance when we put in an appearance.

About this time the Fell & Rock put forward our names as candidates for an Alpine Club novices' meet at Kleine Scheidegg under the tutelage of Wilf Noyce. We trudged down the Aletsch glacier to the audio accompaniment of an electric storm, as far as the Konkordia Hutte. Here the 'thunderbox' was cantilevered over a 500-foot cliff. However to the Barrow shipyard personnel



Ron Miller, John Thompson and Oliver Geere

inured to do their business in seven minutes or lose a quarter hour's pay, this was no problem – just rather chilly.

The actual climbing was on a par with a hard winter in the Lake District or in Scotland, though ice work and crossing glaciers parallel to crevasses required experience we did not possess. The technique of surmounting the bergschrund on the outward and return journeys was another 'first' but thoroughly enjoyable experience. At one point while climbing the Dreieckhorn I was swept off my feet. All I remember of the accident was a shout and finding myself dangling between my two companions – well fielded by Ron Miller.

After a week learning the ropes we were dismissed to fend for ourselves. It was very different to the English Lake District. Using the Gleckstein and Swartzegg huts as bases for operations we did attempt to climb the Wetterhorn, but found the candlelit 4 am start rather hard going, but we appreciated the glories of an alpine dawn and subsequently climbed the Rosenhorn instead. It came as something of a surprise when negotiating a tricky alpine footpath – spikes driven ladder-like into the steep cliff side – to find a sweet young lady in traditional dress seated at a box selling edelweiss. Yes, the Alps are truly beautiful and worthy of their reputation as the playground of Europe; but getting

there (and back) was a wearisome business. Arriving exhausted I overshot my destination and had to make a hasty exit from the train, boots and ice axe in hand after a good kip. These were great times, but the Lake District is second to none, and the same goes for my companions.

It may be of interest to readers to list, in addition to those mentioned above, a few of my earliest companions on the hills. At the time and still fairly local were Arthur Brooks, Jack Lancaster, John Thompson, Gordon Melville and Pete Moffat, together with others moved away including Pete Brown, Jim Fowler and Bill Wilson, and Reg Clucas who died of a heart attack when acting in a supporting role for his son's fell race. Most were Cumbrian bred and 'reet', except that I acquired this exalted status by marriage to Nell. The majority served the Fell & Rock Climbing Club in some capacity or other and were privileged to do so ...

'It fortifies my soul to know,  
That though I perish truth is so;  
That, wheresoe'er I stray and range,  
Whate'er I do, Thou dost not change.  
A steadier step when I recall  
That if I slip, Thou dost not fall.'

*Clough*

Thank you and Cheers! my brothers.

## ASSUMPTION

*Bill Roberts*

Into the gold empyrean  
Correggio's Mary shoots, skirts trailing,  
Through blue skies and wondering angels,  
Joyously, upliftingly,  
Defying gravity and reality,  
Leaving the believer unsteadily  
On the cathedral floor below,  
But taken up too  
Into momentary immortality.  
How close we get!

How close we get, even on this low hill,  
With its convex grassy slopes leading easily,  
By steady pace to the high and holy places;  
The summit once wreathed in a thin mist  
On which the sun threw our ghostly shapes,  
Haloed in a prophetic Brocken;  
Where there is often seen, in the southern distance,  
Outlined on a gold horizon,  
The elysian fields of the inner sanctuary,  
The familiar hills that we have loved, transformed.

Alone on this gentle hill, so often climbed,  
In minatory wind or in uncanny calm,  
White-starred heath flowers at one's feet,  
Above, the lark ascending:  
The spirit lifts to another plane;  
And the simple granite monument,  
Placed lovingly and in pain to one  
Who is now part of "the loveliness  
Which once he made more lovely",  
Carries a double message.

How close we get!  
Closer than Shelley thought,  
For now I know  
That one more step will take me there,  
Beyond that skyline, outside this frame,  
And that we may find identity  
As well as lose it.  
Pisgah may look at Hell Gate  
And, though the darkness still impends,  
I now will trust in this Assumption as life ends.

## CONFESSIONS OF A LAPSED PEAK BAGGER

*Dan Hamer*

The Far Eastern Fells have held a special place in my consciousness for years. Until recently, however, I had never paused to consider why these lesser known summits should occupy such an elevated personal position. The rationale for this strange preference was not immediately apparent. They are lower and more subdued in outline than the rugged peaks of the central Lake District, they boast few, significant, climbable crags and the four largest stretches of water that they contain are man-made.

Gazing northwards from High Raise, towards Loadpot Hill, it is easier to imagine yourself in the Pennines, with the cotton grass bobbing in the breeze and the wavering, purplish backdrop of distant heather miraged in the haze, rather than the Lakes. Perhaps it was this similarity to the Central Pennines, over whose peat groughs I had first stretched my legs as a small boy, which had grabbed my attention.

They wouldn't be so attractive if there was vehicular access over Nan Bield Pass, but thankfully there is little prospect of this ever transpiring. They remain refreshingly unfrequented. It's rare to meet a crowd on the summit plateau of Harter Fell, even in summer, yet it's never a surprise to find deer browsing on the saddle by Satura Crag. Few people know where to find Artle Crag or Selside Pike. Place Fell is one of my favourite half days. The scramble up the outflow from Angle Tarn, above Hartsop, is an unexpected delight. The eerie silence of a frosty day, wrapped in a blanket of thick mist on the Longsleddale Horseshoe, is a potent and lasting memory of a day on the hills with my father.

When I turned thirteen in 1968, the Fell & Rock hut doors were suddenly and invitingly thrown open. I was not entirely unfamiliar with the scene. I had stayed overnight at both the Raw Head and Birkness cottages at regular intervals for as long as I could remember. I could even dimly recall attending the opening ceremony for, the then most recently acquired hut, Beetham Cottage. However, up to that moment I had never slept a single night in any of the main huts.

I am surprised that my family chose Beetham Cottage for that first weekend. We were more familiar with Langdale and Buttermere. I can only surmise that at the start of that new phase in our mountain explorations, Beetham Cottage provided access to a region of the Lake District that we had rarely visited. It proved to be the start of a lengthy familial association.

Bentley Beetham's generous legacy to the Club had been used wisely. The old vicarage on the outskirts of Hartsop proved an excellent hut. Neville

Morton, the first Hut Warden, was setting the highest standards of wardenship and was busy establishing a tradition of hospitality and welcome that would make Beetham Cottage one of the more popular Club venues. However, it wasn't simply staying in the huts that mattered to me. It was the platform that this provided for getting to the tops. I had been ticking off the Lakeland summits in a haphazard manner for several years. Recently, I had been captivated by the idea of a more systematic approach. I had poured over a 1-inch Ordnance Survey Lakeland Map and had made a list of all the 2500-foot tops that I could identify. I knew that overnight access to the huts would be a decisive factor and the August Bank Holiday weekend of 1968 gave me the opportunity to put my plans into effect. I was determined to make that first weekend count.

We arrived at Beetham on the Friday evening around seven o'clock after a swift journey up the M6 from Manchester. The weather forecast was disappointing but from the semicircle of cars already parked next to the hut I could see that it was going to be a busy weekend. I helped Dan unpack the car and arrange our sleeping bags whilst Mol made supper. I had prepared a number of possible routes for the Saturday morning and went to bed early in a mood of juvenile excitement.

Next morning the sky was overcast and grey, but most of the higher summits were clear. A consensus was reached over breakfast and shortly before nine o'clock we set off up the valley behind Hartsop, towards Hayeswater Reservoir in a party of a dozen. We were heading vaguely in the direction of High Street, but long before we reached Knott, more than half the party had changed their minds and gone off in three different directions. I was to learn quickly that this was a characteristic of Fell & Rock parties on the hills. It is a disturbing phenomenon to prospective members, but one that demonstrates a strength of character and individuality much to be emulated.

By lunchtime the cloud base had come down and patches of mist had appeared along the whaleback spine of High Street. The reduced party, including the Hamers, circuted the skyline of Hayeswater Reservoir. A few spots of rain fell in the early afternoon as we descended the Grey Crag ridge, but not enough to dampen my spirits. As we descended into Hartsop Village I reflected that it had been a good start to my campaign. I would be able to scratch the summits of High Raise, Kidsty Pike, High Street and Thornthwaite Beacon off my list.

When I returned to the hut, I recall painstakingly beginning to carve the initials of each top onto slaty fragments that I had pocketed close to each summit. I'm not sure what I had intended to do with these but I had been collecting unusual rock specimens for a number of years. I had just finished 'H ST.' for High Street when two figures appeared in the car park. One was tall, lean, boisterous and loose limbed. I remember noticing the way his socks were casu-

ally rolled down over his boots exposing a pair of weather beaten calves below unbuckled tweed breaches. His companion seemed the perfect foil. He was shorter, stouter, more reflective, moustachioed and pipe-smoking.

'Whatcha doin' young 'n, re-roofin' the dryin' room?' boomed the taller, noisy one in a broad Yorkshire accent and without introduction. I was too awestruck by these stalwart apparitions from the distant fells to respond. But the stout companion came to my rescue and said, 'Just ignore him, everyone else does!' They introduced themselves as Ron Brotherton and Frank Allcock and I was impressed to learn that they were busy ticking off the Lakeland 2000-foot summits for the fourth time. They were delighted to find an apprentice peak-bagger at the hut and amused by my desire to inscribe abbreviations. I noted with some concern, however, that they were disappointed to hear that I was only interested in what they called 'the main tops'.

After supper, Ron looked over his mug of tea, stared in my direction and said, 'Did you do Rampsgill 'ead today? There's no cairn, but it's a named 2500 footer. It's 'alf way between Knott an' 'igh Raise.' To my embarrassment I hadn't noticed it because there was no spot height marked on my map. 'Oh, then you probably haven't got Rough Crag on your list either. Now there's a top not many folk get to!' added Frank. I didn't like to admit that I hadn't the slightest idea where to look for it.

It was a well-timed meeting. They spent the rest of the evening sitting either side of the fire in the lounge extolling the virtues of the many lesser summits. Long before I went to bed I was making drastic modifications and substantial additions to my intended programme. The four pieces of inscribed summit slate were confined to the obscurity of a rockery.

During the next two years my plans frequently took me off the well-trodden paths in search of the lesser-known summits. Lowering the cutoff had more than tripled the number of tops to be climbed. It had also greatly increased the distance to be covered. The routes became more involved and much more interesting to plan. Above all, they were far more revealing and rewarding to execute. My geography of the Lake District improved dramatically and I learned a great deal about mountains.

At the start, I found that I could easily knock off a dozen summits in a single day. Soon, however, it became more difficult and there were many long and arduous days when only two or three tops were possible. When I finally located Rough Crag, I was discouraged to find that there was nothing else near enough to it that I had not already climbed to be completed during the same day. I approached it from above, descending from the summit of Scafell Pike one blisteringly hot day in July.

I persevered and at Don Brumfit's Birkness Meet in November 1970, Ron and Frank accompanied me to the top of the last summit. It was Grisedale



Pike. I think that they derived as much pleasure from the day as I did, although the weather was miserable – low cloud and persistent drizzle. I was a little deflated when we reached the top. I had wanted to see all the summits spread out before me. ‘Never mind lad,’ Ron had said, ‘They’re all still out there.’

In the immediate aftermath of success, numerous friends asked me which mountain stood out above the others. It was an obvious question. The difficulty was that I couldn’t focus on an individual top. My responses were confused and contradictory. First, I tried to think of the physical appearance of the fells. That was easy and I would answer categorically that it had to be ‘Bowfell!’ or ‘Blencathra!’ But then I’d reconsider, remember something specific about a particular day, and blurt out ‘No wait – Great End!’

Only later did I realise that it wasn’t ticking off the tops that mattered. The question of favourite summits or even favourite routes was irrelevant. It was something more fundamental and deeper that really counted. Climbing mountains brought you closer to the people with whom you climbed. It taught you about your friends and perhaps more importantly it taught you about yourself.

After completing the 2000-foot tops, I concentrated on getting to know the Lake District as well as possible to support my forthcoming application to the Club. Ron Brotherton had agreed to be my proposer and I became a Provisional Member in 1973. By 1980, I was ranging further afield in Europe, Scandinavia and South America and had spent one field season working in Antarctica, but each time I came back to the UK, the pleasure of climbing the Lakeland Fells remained undiminished. The hills around Beetham Cottage were still favoured haunts.

Then in 1984, I travelled abroad to Zambia on a two-year contract to work in the Central African Copper mines. Twenty-one years later, I still spend much of my time working overseas as a geologist. For a number of years my trips to the Lake District became infrequent. Flights to England from southern Africa were expensive and my own children too small to walk far in the hills. The Lake District was in danger of becoming a distant memory. However, as the children got older I made a big effort to introduce them to the mountains in general and to the Lake District in particular. Since 1996, the frequency of our family visits increased. At first, the children were confined to walks around Buttermere and Castle Crag. Then they branched out onto the Langdale Pikes, and the Coniston Fells. Gradually they began to tick off their own summits, although thankfully in a more relaxed manner than their father who is trying to discourage the systematic approach of the dedicated peak-bagger.

In the run up to Christmas in 2003, we were staying at the Cottage in Langdale. Sam and Ed had pushed their respective summit tallies into the 90s. They were keen to make it a round 100 before Christmas Day. The largest gap



Silhouettes

*Photo: Dan Hamer*

in their Lakeland lists lay in the Far Eastern Fells, so I suggested the Kentmere Horseshoe. When I went on to explain that I was proposing a day out that included a couple of summits that I had first done 36 years before, they gave me a guarded response. They know all my tricks. Over the last few years, as their strength and stamina have increased, I have used every inducement to get them out onto the tops and keep them moving. I have every confidence that they will soon reach the point where self-motivation will take over.

On this occasion, they eyed me with a mixture of suspicion, affected disinterest and subdued curiosity. Long time frames and large distances do not impress youth; age and experience are better equipped to deal with these weighty concepts. I was acutely aware that I was then the same age that my own father had been on that distant day in 1968! I should have realised that youth is reluctant to acknowledge the value of longevity. Youth responds exuberantly to the immediacy of the present. Youth always has a snappy answer.

We drove around from Langdale into Kentmere on a still, clear morning with an iron-hard frost in the valleys. Beginning at Brockstones we climbed diagonally towards Kentmere Pike on the initial leg of our anticlockwise circuit. Pale wintry sunshine flooded the valley as we made steady progress across the frozen ground. Best of all, there was no-one else in sight and the Far Eastern Fells seemed to have lost none of their charm.

As I sat eating my lunch at the beacon on Thornthwaite Crag, I heard the first hint of rebellion. 'How much further?' It was still more a question than a complaint, but it needed a positive response. In the *Fell & Rock Journal* for 1969 there is a poem by Frank Allcock. It is an adaptation of Milton's 'On His Blindness'. It is Frank's tongue-in-cheek apologia for a lifelong addiction to Munro-bashing. Rereading it I am always left with a hint of sadness that the poet knows he is probably not going to '... climb them all strong booted and present (his) true account.' Nevertheless he can't and didn't stop trying. My half-remembered recitation trailed off in the light breeze that wafted towards Froswick and fell on deaf ears.

Some time later, near the summit of Ill Bell, I mentioned the Roman Road that had once linked Kendal and Penrith. The road that gives High Street its name. I thought this would provide both a diversion and some encouragement. It would have been a bleak undertaking for a Tuscan centurion heading for the Wall with his command. 'Were the Romans still using it when you first came here Dad?' said the oldest with an irritating twinkle in her eye. I was stumbling forward, searching for a suitable, face-saving response when the sudden vision of Ron Brotherton and Frank Allcock, dressed as Roman Auxillaries, legging it up from Ambleside towards us, flashed before me. My mouth creased into a wry smile. 'Yes' I said, 'In a manner of speaking, I think they were.'

## THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING NAPES NEEDLE

*Stephen Reid*

In 1886 (as any fule no) Walter Parry Haskett Smith soloed Napes Needle, thereby becoming the world's first crag-rat, and, incidentally, providing a handy symbol for this fine club of ours. In 1936, Haskett Smith (then aged 74) was taken up the Needle for a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary ascent by Theo Chorley (FRCC President) and Gustave Robert Speaker (FRCC Journal Editor), whilst a crowd of three hundred odd climbers (no odder than today's lot I hear you say) applauded from the wings, ridges and Dress Circle of the Napes. Speaker, being a generous chap by all accounts, then commissioned Una Cameron to produce an artistic rendering of the Needle to be cast in bronze. The pipe smoking, sports car driving, Una was fortunately absolved from the necessity of earning a living due to her family owning Dewars distillery. This enabled her to pursue her twin loves of art and climbing, and she lived much of her life in Courmayeur where she is credited with several new routes on Mt Blanc, as well as on her African excursions, first female ascents of Mounts Kilimanjaro and Kenya. Molly Fitzgibbon recalled staying at Wasdale with Una and "crawling about the foot of the Needle while she made sketches – that explained why it [the statue] is slightly foreshortened". She also notes that the bronze was entirely Speaker's idea and that he paid for the casting himself.



FELL & ROCK CLIMBING CLUB  
IN COMMEMORATION OF  
W.P. HASKETT-SMITH'S  
FIRST ASCENT OF  
NAPES NEEDLE ON  
30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 1886  
AND OF HIS LAST ASCENT  
ON EASTER SUNDAY 1936

On the bronze itself appears the name UNA CAMERON, and the initials GRS.

It is possible – but this is just a guess that it was cast by Bernhard S Harlow, a brassfounding FRCC man who had previously cast the Great Gable FRCC memorial. The sculpture is about 16" high and roughly 11" in diameter

and stands on a round black varnished oak plinth about 2" high.

The first casting of this statuesque statuette was presented to old WPH-S himself by Chorley at the Annual Dinner of the London Section in 1937. Speaker became President of the club that year, and in 1938 gave the FRCC a second copy of the bronze. As far as is known these are the only two that were made. Speaker was killed in a fall on the Napes in 1942.

In 1946 Haskett-Smith died in Dorset, and the WPH-S bronze disappeared from FRCC ken. The approaching Jubilee of the London Section of the FRCC (1970) prompted much correspondence concerning the whereabouts of the "impressive centrepiece for London Section Dinners", as Marjorie Garrod put it in a letter to Peter Ledboer. Marjorie also wrote to Katherine Chorley (from whom she seems to have got the idea that the Haskett-Smith Bronze may in fact have been silver) and Katherine suggested writing to the Alpine Club and to Muriel Files – up to that point Muriel hadn't realised that there were two bronzes. All efforts were to no avail though, and the London Section had to make do with borrowing the Club Bronze for their Jubilee Dinner.

In 1984 the impending centenary celebrations of the first ascent of Napes Needle prompted further efforts to locate the missing bronze. Ruth Gelber of the London section contacted Una Cameron in Italy to see if she could recall what material it was made of, but by then Una was getting on in years and could no longer remember anything about making the Needle sculpture at all. Various other leads, including writing to a random Mr Haskett-Smith who happened to be listed in the London telephone directory were also followed up, but the trail seemed to have gone cold, until that is, the missing bronze surfaced in a quite extraordinary way!

One day in 1979, Lionel Scholes (a house painter) had been asked to quote for a decorating job at the house of a Mrs Wright (a widow) of Purley, Surrey. The story goes that Mr Scholes noticed the bronze propping open the garage door and realised that it had something to do with climbing. On examining it and mentioning that his daughter Lynda was a climber, he was begged to "take the ugly thing away if it was of interest", and was also told that Mrs Wright's late husband had been left or given it by WPH-S. Lynda at the time was married to Fred Hall, chief engineer and designer of climbing equipment at DMM in North Wales.

The first the Club knew of this was in June 1987 when a letter to Paddy O'Neill (at that time Secretary) arrived from Fred offering first refusal of the bronze to the FRCC. "Obviously", he wrote "such a unique object is difficult to value but it has been indicated to me that offers in excess of £5,000 would be reasonable." That equates to over £10,000 today, so it is perhaps understandable that the Club declined Fred's generous offer – a curt note inscribed on the

bottom of his letter states "Phoned 3/7/87. No!" According to Lynda, the Halls were also told that apart from not being able to afford it, the Club already had a bronze of its own and so had no particular wish to acquire a second! Muriel Files was still the Club Archivist in 1979 so I imagine that she would have known of this discovery, but strangely there is no mention of it in her folder on the missing Needle.

There I suppose the matter might have rested, but for the fact that, sadly, Lynda's marriage to Fred did not last, and when they split up she took the bronze with her. Her house was rather small and so it was stored in the attic where she rediscovered it when she came to move again in 2004. Someone suggested to her that a chap who had named his climbing shop after Napes Needle might be interested in it and so I acquired it (for, I hasten to add, considerably less than the original asking price!).

A crucial part of the mystery still remains unsolved: what was the connection between Haskett-Smith and Mr Wright? Fred was as sure as he could be with the passage of time that Wright was a distant relative of Haskett-Smith's, and though WPH-S never married, he did have siblings. Even Alan James would have to admit that a lot of dross gets posted on his UKClimbing.com site, the major British climbing internet chatsite, but even the most cynical would agree that it does occasionally have its uses, and putting me in touch with Sybil Crawford, grand niece of WP Haskett-Smith (and grand-daughter of Edmund Haskett-Smith), and now living in Nova Scotia was one of them - she kindly sent to me photos of WPH-S's old home, and his grave. A second enabled me to make contact with Phil Haskett-Smith whose Great Grandfather was Thomas, WPH-S's younger brother. And Phil had a strange tale to relate. Around 1975, as part of his job in the roofing trade, he had to visit a Mr Wright who worked for a builder's merchants (he thinks it might have been Jewson's) in Coulsdon, Surrey. Mr Wright asked him if he was related to the Haskett-Smith, and when Phil admitted that he was, Wright explained that he had "a big bronze paperweight", as he put it, that had once belonged to him on his desk. He seemed very proud of it, but Phil was not interested in climbing at the time (though he has done a bit since), and did not really take much notice of it. He vaguely thinks that Wright may have stated that he acquired it from some Lake District mining company, but he can't be sure. And there the mystery rests, unless some retired FRCC member with time on their hands fancies making a few enquiries to see if Mr Wright has any friends or relatives still living who might be able to shed any further light on the matter.

The Club Bronze itself has had something of a chequered life. Molly Fitzgibbon looked after it for many years (presumably it meant more to her than most people), but in 1957 it was proposed that it should go to the President for his or her term of office. In 1965 though, Donald Murray voiced the opinion

that he and various past Presidents actually found the thing “something of an encumbrance” and it was agreed that any President who didn’t wish to be so encumbered could deposit it on top of the bookcase at Rawhead. Molly was upset – she reckoned “it would never be dusted”. Since then it has been relieved of the coat of dark varnish on its oak base, and the bronze itself has been considerably polished and lightened (what would the Antiques Roadshow have to say about that?!), but it still makes it’s appearance at the Club’s annual dinners, as it has done for almost 70 years.

Apart from the ‘improvements’ to the Club bronze, the two are very obviously peas out of the same pod, and it is rather charming that the missing Napes Needle has finally surfaced just in time for the centenary of the FRCC in 2006. At the Centenary Dinner, members should be reassured that they are not necessarily squiffy if they think that they can see two Napes Needles on the top table!

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## ABOUT A VALLEY

*Bill Comstive*

This is a small collection of thoughts and reminiscences about a magnificent and dramatic valley that has nurtured some of the best climbers and mountaineers of the post-war years; many of them members of this club.

I have my parents to thank for my love of the mountains of Lakeland. Nearly all our annual family holidays were spent there. An early recollection of awareness of those mountains was sitting in a rowing boat at the head of Windermere, with my father, on a beautiful July evening in 1946. We were returning to Waterhead after an evenings fishing at the mouth of the River Brathay. My father drew my attention to the mountains we could see, from Fairfield round to Ill Bell. It was one of those rare evenings in high summer; the rays of the setting sun highlighting the ridges; a backdrop of tinted cumulus clouds casting long shadows across the hillsides and a faint breeze breaking the surface of the water. I can still clearly remember that evening and I always shall. It was cycling and fishing in those days, but that experience, plus a similar one when I left my fishing rod under the joiner's shed at Brathay Bridge to scramble up Todd Crag, that ultimately led me to the mountains of Lakeland.

This comparatively small mountainous area is unique in many ways and has been the cradle of so many distinguished mountaineers in the past century. On numerous occasions, having just returned from the Alps, as the car reaches the crest of the hill leading down into Windermere and that wonderful panorama unfolds, the thought is much the same for so many of us – it's good to be back. That is the magic of this wonderful corner of England that inspired the late Harry Griffin to write ten books, with hardly any repetition in the volumes. The Abraham brothers pioneered rock climbing and mountain photography. W. W. Poucher published four pictorial photographic records and artists such as A. Heaton Cooper and his son W. Heaton Cooper painted hundreds of watercolour studies of the mountains of Lakeland. This is just to mention a few of the gifted men who were inspired in this way. There are of course many others such as the poet William Wordsworth and the writers Prof. W.G. Collingwood and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Endless books have been written, TV documentaries and films produced and despite, or because of, all this publicity the fells have never lost their popularity from one generation to another.

It is true to say, however, that due to the increased numbers of motor vehicles, the Lake District has lost some of its charm in high season. I can remember winters that were almost devoid of tourists, but these days weekends in the winter are almost as busy as they are in the summer. I suppose that



this mass tourism serves to illustrate the magical charm that the Lake District and its mountains exert on so many people.

Occasionally I stayed with my parents at the Old and New Dungeon Ghyll Hotels. It was at the ODG that I first met the Bulmans. They had moved from Eskdale to the ODG in 1938 to combine inn-keeping with farming, whilst their son John and his sister farmed and ran the NDG. Cyril Bulman was a giant of a man with a strong voice, half Cumbrian and half cultured. Mostly dressed in breeches and long stockings, he was the perfect host. At dinner in the evening he ceremoniously carried the meat into the dining room and carved the portions for each serving. He was a sportsman who enjoyed shooting and fishing, not mountaineering. I remember that there was a fishing rod always at the ready and a couple of sporting guns usually standing in a corner of the little bar. John Bulman was a keen fell-walker and skier and I often met him, usually alone, fell-walking or skiing on the Pikes above the hotel.

The Bulmans owned a considerable acreage on the north side of the Langdale valley including Rawhead and the buildings next door which later became Bishops Scale. When Cyril and his wife moved to the New DG, Sid and Jammy Cross took over the ODG. After Cyril Bulman died the family sold the NDG, John moved to a farm in the Newlands valley and his mother retired to a delightful cottage on the north side of Loughrigg Tarn. When John Bulman died relatively young on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1998, the Lake District lost one of its greatest champions. Countless walkers and climbers benefited from his many achievements.

My friend Alan Brown and I graduated from cycling to fell-walking and rock climbing because we had an enthusiasm to explore the Lakeland fells. Initially we were not members of a club, so we were exploring a region on our own initiative relying mainly on the one inch to one mile OS map and books borrowed from the library. We joined the YHA and used the hostels for accommodation, often walking from one hostel to another. We did some scrambling, taking our own line and progressed to climbing. Our first rope was acquired from Blackpool Rope and Twine Co.; we thought that the thicker the rope the better our chances were in case of a fall. I still have photographs of us using that rope; it must have looked very thick draped across a crag. When it got wet the weight was such that the tension was divided between moving upwards and at the same time being pulled downwards. We had some wonderful days together on the hills in all kinds of weather. It was so very different then; far less people, uneroded paths, no queuing to climb on the more popular routes and a wonderful feeling of freedom. The publication of so many walking and climbing guides, TV and radio programmes, the huge increase in vehicle ownership and the desire of the working population to get away, have all led to the point where the Lake District is being suffocated by tourism. It will never be the same

as it was, but who can blame anyone from wanting to spend time there. There is no real answer to the problem.

Some two years after our solitary wanderings, Alan and I joined the Fylde Mountaineering Club the year it was formed. From that day on it was out with the old and in with the new. The old rope was passed on to a yacht owner and we bought a length of Beale's, (I remember it from the red strand that ran through it) together with some belay lengths and ex WD karabiners. We did not know at that time that these were not reliable. We still had to rely on ex WD clothing, but some of it was good quality. We gained experience from our membership of the FMC which added to our safety and resulted in more confidence in which to enjoy our days on the hills of Lakeland. The club did not have a hut at that time but organised fortnightly coach meets to the Lake District. Our annual dinner was held at the ODG and it was there that I first became acquainted with Syd and Jammy Cross who, in partnership with Albert and Ruth Hargreaves, also ran the Burnmoor Inn in Eskdale.

Alan and I went to Langdale at week-ends and Bank Holidays as often as possible. We slept mostly in Wall End barn or camped at the farm. In those days the ODG was more remote, the twice daily bus service only went as far as Chapel Stile. We had no car and relied on hitch-hiking to and from home, often arriving late in Ambleside on Friday evening and having to walk the whole way down Langdale with all our gear for the week-end. We started skiing on the fells as a result of a gift of a pair of skis. Alan equipped himself with ex WD skis which were so heavy that they almost took him down the slopes. We learned the basic turns and manoeuvres from a library book and later we both joined the Lake District Ski Club and used their lift on Raise; our technique improved from joining groups receiving instruction. We explored all the skiable slopes above Langdale and had some wonderful days on High Raise and High White Stones. You could count on snow lying somewhere on the tops between the end of November and April of the following year. I have a photograph of us skiing near Esk Hause on a sunny day in June. So certain were we that there would be snow from one week-end to the next that sometimes we took the bindings from our skis and hid them under a boulder near Stickle Tarn to save carrying them up. The thought that they may have been stolen never entered our heads.

In bad weather we helped Syd and Jammy in the hotel and it was there that we met the great and good of the F & R CC and one of the treats was to be invited to the club's New Year celebrations, which were a feature during the Crosses' years at the old hotel. The ODG was a mecca for many of the famous names associated with the development and opening-up of the Langdale crags. We also met several famous mountaineers including Geoffrey Wynthrop Young, members of the 1953 Everest expedition, Joe Brown, Arthur Dolphin and oth-

ers involved in making the history of first ascents. Alan and I met most of the climbers from time to time in the outside bar at ODG, the setting of many unforgettable sing-songs, after which we staggered up the road to Wall End barn or crawled into sleeping bags in a cold draughty tent.

When Syd and Jammy retired the ODG was never the same again. Their successor catered for guests with a thick wallet and big car, but that failed because the head of Langdale had little to offer that type of person. These days it is thronged mainly with fell-walkers dressed in the expensive multi-coloured outdoor gear; but it is encouraging to see family parties with young children taking to the fells. The explosion in numbers has caused the problem of erosion on popular paths but, thanks to the hard work of volunteers, essential repairs are continually being carried out in the worst areas.

Alan and I drifted apart when he married and left Blackpool to run a business in Torquay. I subsequently joined the F & RCC because the FMC deteriorated due to an influx of the wrong types. I have never been so happy in any organisation and I always regretted not taking-up the offer from Syd Cross and Alf Gregory of applying to join the F & RCC in the nineteen fifties.

Langdale has lost some of its charm but not all of it. In the valley it is still exciting to see the first snows of winter falling on the Pikes, or to stand in the doorway of Rawhead on a late spring evening and watch the sun set behind the west ridge, casting long shadows across Side Pike and Lingmoor. By that time the day visitors have departed and the valley is more tranquil. If you stand there a little longer you will see the lights coming on in the tents at the camp-site, a facility not there when I first started to explore the Langdale hills. On the other hand it is good to see so many young people out and about in the Lakeland mountains, we shall just have to learn to cope with them all. How different it all was in the days when Byron wrote the following lines in 1820:

To climb the trackless mountain all unseen  
 With the wild flock that never needs a fold,  
 Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to lean,  
 This is not solitude; tis but to hold  
 Converse with Nature's charms, and view her stores unrolled.

Byron was not a mountaineer, but somehow or somewhere he had been impressed by a vision of mountain scenery. Perhaps that is how I was originally baptised ... by hills, clouds and water when my parents dragged me in my pushchair along some of the lower paths of Lakeland. I am truly glad that they did. I still like to cast a fly in a Lakeland stream, like the late Dick Plint, but no advance in age will keep me off the higher fells as long as I am able to reach

them. I have climbed mountains abroad, but there is still nothing quite like a day on the Lakeland fells, with a group of like-minded members of the club and a return to the hut for tea and buns round a roaring fire, to debate and argue about policies put out by the committee.

We must preserve all this and it is heartening to know that many others feel the same. The application to erect a windfarm on the Whinash ridge on the border between the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks has been turned down. A victory for all those opposing such desecration, but wait awhile and something similar will appear; planners never seem to learn the value of what we have in areas of remote and highly sensitive landscapes. To destroy them is to take away peoples rights to wander freely and uninhibited by such monstrous developments. Just imagine, for one horrible moment, to hear of an application to build generators below Stickle Tarn ... impossible ? Maybe; but don't be surprised if some fanatics try.



## HOW TO GET CERTIFIED

Ever wondered what is involved in obtaining the Mountain Leadership Award? I was passed these notes by a friend who wishes to remain anonymous. Only the facts have been changed...

Once I had given up entirely on the unpleasant prospect of so called respectable work and slid into the clammy embrace of what passes for the educational system a cunning plan occurred to me. Why not get paid for taking children out into the hills sometimes instead of boring them in a laboratory? And perhaps also make a slight second income by losing the more objectionable of my charges, fees to be paid by subject teachers particularly desiring an end to their acquaintance with said pupils...

This excellent wheeze was encumbered only by the petty bureaucratic requirement that I obtain a Mountain Leadership certificate, which seemed entirely redundant to me as I have no intention of leading a mountain anywhere, assuming for one moment that such a preposterous thing could come to pass. My attempts to manufacture a plausible looking document with the aid of my trusty John Bull Printing Set (a moment of nostalgia for readers of a certain vintage) having failed, it became apparent that I should have to procure the requisite paperwork in a more or less legitimate manner.

In the nature of these things it further became apparent that I could not simply turn up at the appointed hour, pass a pleasant day or two on the hill with some like minded soul and conclude matters over a refreshing ale or two (and if appropriate by bestowing upon the soul a couple of used tenners). No, a training course was required, and to be allowed on one such a log book had to be purchased and completed, and then an assessment course had to be attended and passed. The sheer injustice of subjecting a man of my experience to these ignominies ensured that my gorge rose, my dander was up, and all manner of florid literary stuff. In short, I entered the lists.

Having sent of a postal order for several shillings, I was some months later the recipient of a log book for completion, and a tome on the subject of Hill Walking, which upon perusal I found to be full of useful information such as how to walk, read a map, cross a river etc.

So last October I betook myself to darkest Clapham whence a motley ensemble of similarly intended foregathered for the ghastly ritual of "We shall just go round the group and introduce ourselves". It became apparent that there were several teachers and a couple of students (one can apparently obtain a degree in Outdoor leadership and environmental studies these days and there is an campus, whatever that may be, near Penrith. I make no doubt it is full of rotters who failed to get a place on accountancy degrees or some such, but that

is by the by.) plus the usual assortment of odd bods. Thankfully we retired to licensed premises at a suitable juncture, the evening's conviviality only spoiled by the worried looking souls who were about to start their assessment week.

A couple of pleasant days hiking followed, although it was clear from an early stage that some of our number were attending as a cheaper alternative to a week at Plas y Brenin or similar and wished to acquire basic skills rather than prepare for assessment. One of these loudly informed us at every opportunity that he had been to South America and gave several useful tips on the avoidance of anacondas, how to converse with pygmy cannibals and so forth. He also claimed to be a rock climber of some standing, boasting that he had led several Severes in his eighteen months of climbing, which naturally impressed the two sisters with odd nicknames (Tav and Caz? Baz and Shaz? I forget) and lycra clad nether regions, one of whom had been on some excursion somewhere or other and decided that she was to be the next Scott of the Antarctic, or perhaps she was aiming to better his performance and survive. It all made a sort of perverted sense when she explained that she worked in PR.

Given our avowed intent to lead mountains we decamped to the Lake District for the second phase, based at a mountain hut in Irish Row, Coppermines valley. A day of "security on steep ground" was most instructive – these chaps had never heard of harnesses, runners or karabiners. I managed to disguise my mirth until I was invited to abseil without any modern equipment, when it all became less funny. Some compensation for this was provided by the sight of Mr Rock Experience himself apparently unable to set up a belay or safeguard his party, although he had a very helpful anecdote regarding the Puma.

The final flourish of the training was an "expedition", which is apparently what it is called when you go out, walk for a day and camp out. This was made considerably more pleasant than expected by the benevolent appearance of the sun, and a most beautiful day as we toiled up from Cockley Beck to the Crinkles. I forbore from pointing out to our instructor that we could have started from the top of Wrynose pass and saved ourselves some height, it did not seem fair to draw attention to his apparent inability to read a map.

A moments light relief was provided by one in our party of 6 who instructs at an outdoor centre ( and apparently one can do so without the requisite certificate which was the cause of all this trouble) who, when invited to navigate on a one inch map (we had up to this point been using the modern two and a half inch items) placed us some half a mile from where we were. I realised that I would have some ground to make up in the matter of losing children by comparison to this.

Tents eventually pitched and I was looking forward to a relaxing evening, when I was informed that we would be "going out on night nav". This turns out to be a summer version of getting off a winter route in Scotland, where you

stumble about in the dark for a few hours falling into bogs. My earlier suspicions about our instructor were confirmed when he said "Show me on the map where we are". I pointed out that I was relying on him for that sort of information – what do these Johnnies think they are getting paid for?

We returned the next morning to Clapham and were, as they say, debriefed. Judging by some of the faces afterwards the stories about the jungle/arctic had not been well received by the instructor. Some people have no sense of humour.

So having inveigled my employers into financing another jolly I betook myself back to Clapham this Easter past for assessment. This was of course after many hours spent embroidering my past deeds into a glorious account of deeds done and mountains led. If not the ML I should surely get the Booker prize for fiction ?

The same ghastly introduction session left me fairly worried, I appeared to be sharing assessment with half the staff of the Outward Bound (or OB as they referred to it – I at first thought his was a reference to Mr Spielberg and his Star Wars tetralogy, but alas Alec Guinness was nowhere to be seen. Perhaps his death explains this ?) Faced with such Muscular Christianity I could see that underhand tactics were going to be called for.

My fears were somewhat allayed during the evening route planning scenario when at least one of the team seemed to be operating in the southern hemisphere based on his interpretation of a weather chart. Fortified by this I sought succour at licensed premises.

Monday dawned clear, sunny and fair as only the Dales in spring can be. Four of us and the course director set off up Ingleborough for a day of navigation. As two of our party were of the aforementioned OB persuasion I was prepared to be mightily impressed. When John marched past the shakehole he was aiming for and did not realise his mistake for 20 minutes I started to feel a little better, and the failure of his female OB colleague to relocate the party despite a huge prominent feature fifty yards away calmed my nerves considerably. Perhaps the Gods do have feet of clay.

Tuesday and off to Irish Row for a day of security on steep ground, this enlivened by my complete failure to tie a fisherman's knot, pretty good after 26 years of climbing I thought. The instructor was suitably amused by this and I assume, found my thrashing unbelayed up a slimy drainage channel sufficiently entertaining to overlook my manifest ineptitude. Once our team student took over the lead things became truly exciting as his route finding took us unerringly up the steepest most unstable tottering death he could find. Our assessor (course director and a qualified guide no less) went a funny colour and hastily belayed him round a loose block at

one point. This was just like a day out with the Fell and Rock, and I almost enjoyed myself.

The next day was the start of the expedition, or Exped as they say at OB. Two nights out this time, and the weather really started to brew up. I was grouped with John of OB fame, another female OB called Elaine and Jen, who works at a field study centre. Our assessor for this leg, Stuart, was a man of few words and grim visage. Upon arriving at a very blustering and snowy Three Tarns he asked Elaine to lead us up Bowfell, and she pointed out that in such weather she would not proceed further with a party unless very experienced. We all agreed wholly with this and said so. "Noted, but we are going up anyway" he barked, stalking off to don his overtrousers. Nonplussed we followed suit, at which point he announced that we were right, it was not safe to go up, "down to Green Hole please Elaine". So we were all happy, we could foresee a camp down in sheltered Eskdale and night nav in that vicinity, not a delight but bearable under the circumstances.

Arriving at Green Hole: "Right John, up to Ore Gap" ! The man was clearly unhinged, but meekly we complied. After much more stumbling about Stuart announced that we were to camp at Angle Tarn – in severe gales and rain. We again all stated that with a party in our care we should head down Rossett Ghyll and camp in Mickleden, but, "Noted, but its your assessment and I want it to be hard, and the night nav in Mickleden would be too easy."

So, finding the least sodden ground ( a strictly relative concept in the conditions) we set about putting up tents. Elaine at once suffered snapped pole, and her repair sleeve (supplied with the tent) was too small to fit. In a moment of unthinking kindness I lent her mine, only then realising that if I snapped a pole...

Big Stu now appeared to suffer a stab of conscience, and announced that we would be let off night nav as he had once returned to camp under similar conditions to find that one tent had been blown away, we were therefore to secure our tents as best we could and remain in them. After a happy hour carrying rocks to weight mine and Jens tent whilst she assisted Elaine with her repaired tent and John disappeared into his tent to brew up (selfless types, these OBs), I finally retired inside and removed my gaiters. I was about to unlace my boots when Big Stu arrived and announced that as the weather was somewhat inclement we should decamp down Rossett Ghyll. It was 6pm.

At 7.30 pm we were at last securely pitched and our leader announced that we would not have to do night nav as we had had a tiring day. I recall that sleep came quickly.

Thursday and perhaps unsurprisingly we went up again. A long day of navigating, confidence roping and other assorted jollity took us eventually to Bright Beck Cove, where tents were erected and night nav announced for 8pm.





Abseiling the MLT way

*Photo: John Holden*

As it was not dark fully at that hour Big Stu said we should start anyway and gave me the honour of the first leg. This was to find a feature on the map which I simply could not locate, despite being wholly certain that I was at the correct location. After some minutes of me staring at the ground Stuart asked where I was and I told him that I was certain of my position but could not explain why the feature was not there. I was, you may gather, somewhat down-cast as navigation is what one is most likely to fail on. Stuart then confessed to the group that in the opinion of all the instructors he knows the map is wrong, it was all a deliberate ploy to see how I coped etc. Oh how we laughed at his zany sense of humour.

The rest of the evening was the usual blur of bog, rain and hail with additional entertainment being provided by John who when given a leg to navigate proudly announced that he had done just that very leg on his training exped, and failed to locate the end point. We finally got to bed just before midnight.

Poor Stuart must have been unwell on Friday morning as he did nothing unpleasant to us, and we stumbled off to the Old Dungeon Ghyll for a celebratory cup of tea. Once back at Clapham I was given the nod on the grounds that I never again venture into the hills, and that I never reveal the secrets of how to get certified. Which of course I shall not. Ever.

*Editors' note: Anonymous manuscript supplied by Nick Hinchliffe*

## ORDEAL BY FIRE OR A CRAG REBORN

*John Cook*

It was undoubtedly all my fault. The others shared the guilty secret that was kept for years and we all experienced the fear that we really might be burned to death but, if I hadn't then been a careless smoker, nothing would have happened and White Ghyll would have no doubt continued to luxuriate in its vegetation on the lower crag. Perhaps now almost sixty years have passed we can come clean!

It was a gorgeous summer, hot and dry for weeks on end, and the four of us were looking forward to our reunion in Langdale. We had all been scattered around the country at different universities and jobs but we had been firm friends since starting to climb. We had the confidence of our age and felt competent to lead any established route and deal with any conditions we met. All of us except Joe had been brought up on Yorkshire gritstone: he had cut his teeth on Helsby's sandstone. When he wasn't able to find one of us to climb with, Joe, Joe Griffin that is, had been quietly soloing routes like 'F' on Gimmer and Diagonal Route in Wales. Des Birch, then still a teenager – just – had already led the hardest routes on Scafell's East Buttress as well as many on other Lakeland crags and in Wales, mostly in 'nails', while John 'Pug' Ball had, as a youngster, borrowed Menlove Edwards's 'Cloggy' guidebook from the local library and led all the routes described. I had started to revise the Langdale Guide with Arthur Dolphin and a few months previously, while exploring White Ghyll, I had made the second ascent of Jim Birkett's Slip Knot, working out a direct finish by chance through ignorance of Jim's original line. Now, as we gathered at Raw Head, I thought Slip Knot would be an ideal route for our first climb together.

After the usual preambles on Scout Crag and its boulders we found ourselves at the foot of the climb. I think we were all wearing boots of one kind or another, not that it's particularly relevant except in making our eventual escape over the fell rather easier. I know that I was rejoicing in the pleasures of Vibram soles on my boots instead of 'nails', having just discovered their advantages on dry rock at least during an Alpine holiday. I led off up the delightful first pitch with its satisfying sharp holds, lighting a cigarette on the way as was my dreadful habit on occasions in those days. On reaching the good stance and belay, I brought John up while Des led a second rope, following closely behind. As John arrived, with Des just behind him, I noticed a small plume of smoke rising from some vegetation way down to my right in an inaccessible place. I was puzzled at first then realized it must be coming from a cigarette end which I thought I had ex-

tinguished and thrown away. It wasn't a problem, I thought, as I glanced idly at it, that is until a flame suddenly shot up followed almost immediately by all the accoutrements of a full-scale fire.

We all have our individual recollections of what we saw and what went through our minds just then. As he climbed up on to the ledge, Joe recalls seeing his partner Des's feet surrounded by flames. There was no time to take stock or to consider rationally what action would be appropriate. A pleasant climb up an amenable route had turned in a few seconds into a possible death trap. I vividly remember climbing as rapidly as possible up the overhang above, which had given me much food for thought on the last acquaintance. Without waiting for me to finish the pitch, the others followed 'en masse', pulling their ropes up as they climbed so as to prevent them from being consumed by the flames which were now threatening to engulf us. There was choking smoke everywhere and, increasingly, the noise of large chunks of rock becoming detached from the main crag and crashing down to the gully below. It seemed an age before we staggered together on to the top of the crag although the time taken can only have been just a few minutes. Without pausing we ran up on to the open fell, convinced that the fire would follow us wherever we went. Suddenly we were out of the smoke and breathing clean air. We could actually speak and make rational decisions again. It seemed sensible to head quickly in the direction of Stickle Tarn and, once safely away from the area that was on fire, to consider our next steps. We decided to head round in a semicircle and come on to the broad ridge looking across to the crag beyond the deep gully. From this secure vantage point we watched in awe and amazement as the greater part of the crag seemed to go up in flames. Trees disappeared in seconds, flames suddenly shot up scores of feet and rocks of all shapes and sizes detached themselves from the face and came bouncing and crashing on to the scree below. It was a positive inferno and, if it could have been captured on film, would surely have served as a graphic, if unusual, illustration of the dangers of smoking.

When we could turn our eyes away for a moment, we looked down over a thousand feet to the road in the valley and could pick out groups of people looking up at the conflagration. Then, to complete this extraordinary scenario, a fire engine appeared and stopped on the road below the Ghyll. What possible use this could have been defies imagination but it merely added to our feeling of guilt. We had begun to feel a little better as we saw that the fire was not extending beyond the confines of the crag itself and a few further yards of fellside. The wind was thankfully blowing it back from the rest of the mountain which at one stage we had feared would also be burned. Then we saw the figure of a man leaving the road and coming up the Ghyll towards us at speed. He couldn't have seen us at that stage but such was our concern that we moved

quickly away and disappeared over the fell. We didn't want anybody to connect us with this act.

Hours later that evening we decided we could venture into the local hostleries to treat ourselves to a drink or two and listen to any comments folk might be making about the fire. From obscure positions at the back of a couple of bars we listened attentively, but with straight faces, to the stories that seemed to be on everybody's lips, some sheer speculation about how such a fire could possibly have happened and others the result of professed eyewitnesses who had, for example, seen a group of Boy Scouts deliberately start the fire. We kept very quiet – then and afterwards.

As a postscript, after a winter of rain and frost had swept away most of the black sludge that had covered much of the crag, new clean rock faces appeared offering lines of ascent where none had previously been practicable. Soon a whole host of new routes was recorded including one appropriately named 'Inferno'. It did seem to us, however, that it might have been even more appropriate if our own climb that day, Slip Knot, had been rechristened with that name. And yes, I did stop smoking when climbing and eventually gave it up altogether. And, apart from John who sadly is no longer with us, we are all even better friends.



## RAVEN, SEEK THY BROTHER

*David Craig*

When I was climbing constantly, from 1973 to about 1990, if I saw a raven cruising above the crag before I started up a route, I used to say, 'Raven, seek thy brother' – an Arab saying meant to ward off ill luck. Gavin Maxwell used it for the title of one of his memoirs. (It didn't work for him). The black silhouette of the mountain crow prints the sky above most Lakeland crags. The names say it: Raven Crag, Threshwaite Cove; Raven Langdale, where I learned to climb; Raven Thirlmere, girdled by Peter Greenwood's excellent traverse, which I was about to climb with Peter and the route's co-author, Don Whillans, when Don died in August 1985. I finally did it with Geoff Oliver in May 1990. We'd had some storming days, above all when we did his delectable little Pernod on Scafell East, then trogged back down to Seathwaite in Borrowdale and put up Maginot Line on Aaron Crags. He didn't relish the loose rock above the cave on Raven Thirlmere. We survived it, and it remains for me one of the most satisfying and varied routes in the country: a ladder of little holds up The Apocrypha (Soper and Allinson's variation on pitch 1 of Genesis/Anarchist); dizzy downclimbing on the big corner, where the perspective down the drop so unnerved me that it took me ten minutes to make the first steps; then stretching strides from hold to hold, reversing part of Communist Convert, on the way to easier terrain above the yawning hollow of the Cave.

All those bird associations mean a lot to me because, when I think about it, being amongst wild nature is my prime motive for climbing. You could hardly be closer to it, more in amongst it. You're grasping rock, sinking your fingers in moist moss, clasping lovingly at the roots and boles of trees, cursing bird-shit – wonderful! You're smelling the struck-match odour of baking rock (especially in the scorching summers of 1976 and 1983). You're hearing close up the bark of ravens or the staccato squawk of angry peregrines.

Especially if you're soloing and there are no calls from yourself or your partner to affright the birds and other animals. When I was doing the field-work for the 1987 Buttermere guide, I got as near peregrines as I ever will. On Striddle Crag at the back of Fleetwith Pike, where nobody ever goes, I had almost completed pitch 2 of Mark's Route when I put my hand on the end of a shelf cut deeply into the rock. Just as I saw a clutch of creamy eggs with reddish-brown markings, a bird shot off like a bolt of lightning and grew suddenly smaller as it streaked away towards Green Crag with wing-wrenching zigs and zags. I quickly mantled on up the start of pitch 3 to give the bird peace to return. It was a falcon, a female peregrine. Next day, climbing Carnival with Rick Graham on Eagle, Birkness Combe, I was maintaining my position with

some difficulty on the very steep face of pitch 4 when a pair of peregrines showed me how to be free and fearless amongst heights by plunging past me in some kind of ecstatic mating-play – pulling out of the dive with athletic twists of wing - plunging again in a blur before sheering off into the air-space of thecombe. How we all play before the serious business of bringing up children closes in!

Peregrines almost never nest in trees, although they occasionally use an old raven's nest. I almost trod on one when I was exploring outcrops in the Calf How area of upper Kentdale. One line claws up a green wall into a holly, struggles painfully through the prickles, then heads for an exposed traverse and a final 'Amen Corner' which I've only once had the bottle to do on my own. In the tree a clattering sounded and a falcon shot off through the branches, leaving a twig nest with eight eggs (instead of the usual three or four). It feels like an intrusion into someone else's domestic life when you stumble so closely in amongst them, and it was rather like that when I was in Longsleddle, going up to climb The Minotaur at the apex of Buckbarrow. On the skyline at the summit a tiercel was treading a falcon in clear silhouette.

My mate Chris Culshaw and I often start the season on that crag because it is an appetising goal at the end of a saunter up a perfect dale (narrowly saved, I believed, from being flooded to make a reservoir in the Fifties). Two years ago we were stopped from even setting a hand on Buckbarrow. As we neared the head of the scree, a fit-looking man who had been jogging down as we approached came right back up again and asked us, not all that breathlessly, if we would mind not climbing there that day. He was a member of the Cumbria Raptor Group and he was worried that ravens might be scared off their nests. They had recently fought with peregrines for the tenancy of Goat Scar across the dale, the hawks had won, and the mountain crows had moved over here. Now, a raven is not a raptor. For another thing ravens are so abundant in Lakeland that they hardly need protection. We backed down and went for a walk instead, amongst the labyrinths of man-made gorges and stone palisades where lead was mined at the dale-head. No doubt the Buckbarrow ravens are happily ensconced by now. The bird mates for life and usually occupies the same nest year after year. The finest example of this I ever saw was in Newlands, which Bill Peascod 'gave to George Rushworth', his coal-miner partner, in the late Forties. When I was reconnoitring Waterfall Buttress for the Guide, I saw on the fellside above – approximately where the number 6 is on the O.S. map north of Eel Crag and below the word 'Cairn' – a vertical yew trunk making a vee with a steeply-angled rockface. At least twelve feet of twigs had built up between crag and tree, green with algae at the bottom, bleached grey in the middle, and fresh brown at the top. How many generations of ravens have made this their home?

The beauty of the crags in Newlands – and of Buckbarrow, and Hutaple in Deepdale, and Dove and Black Crag in Dovedale, and many another Cumbrian fastness – is that they are fairly shaggy, still more or less natural, and will remain so now that the likes of Spain have become fashionable. You can climb such Lakeland crags – often, admittedly, through dripping moss and waist-deep heather – and come into a little secret paradise. In Newlands at the right-hand end of Red Crag (Lower Tier) there is a steepish Hard Diff. called Heather Entry. I've only ever done it alone. In the early Eighties Bill Peascod never mentioned it, although we were trawling closely along what had been just Eel Crag until he and George Rushworth named the main cliffs – Grey, Red, Waterfall, and Miners. The Guide lists no date for it and no authors. You pull straight up on chunky holds, with faith (which is justified) that there is rock beneath the bushy heather. After fifteen metres you step out into a copse of mature rowans, dozens of them. No animals have been able to get here and graze them down. The heather has never been burned. I remember sinking down into it as though into a yielding bed and looking out through the grille of silvery trunks and lattices of fresh green pinnate leafage in a state of pure contentment. Hindscarth and Dale Head reared up on high. Forget them – forget the toiling up the screes that flank the dale. Right here an atmosphere of peat and honey folds you in and for an hour or so the anxious delights of climbing give way to the carefree bliss of doing nothing whatsoever in this perfect neuk of wilderness.

Nature in Lakeland is a matter more of plants than of animals because the centuries of hill farming have driven away the creatures. Eagles died out (and have had to be reintroduced near Haweswater), although there were a fair few once and had crags named after them in Birkness Combe, Borrowdale, Grizedale. Otters are rare, and making a comeback. Badgers tunnel out their dens in softer ground near crags, e.g. on Nab Scar north of Rydal Water and on the eastern slope of Whitbarrow a mile or two from Chapel Head Scar. I saw red deer just once, in Swindale, amongst heather and blaeberreries on the ridge above Goucher Crag. Frankly, the commonest animals on the crags are ants. My son Peter and I actually called a route Red Ant Motorway because an army of them kept filing up our brand-new purple rope – that was on Jura in the Inner Hebrides and I musn't stray outside Cumbria ... The ants all over the forest floor below Gowder Crag, on the east bank of the Lodore Falls in lower Borrowdale, are hateful, like black-peppercorns with legs. They love swarming into rucksacks, no doubt foraging for the chocolate-covered Kendal mint-cake which I always carry. Their smaller, redder kinsfolk, who seem to prefer human flesh, invaded our sleeping-bags when we bivvied at the summit of Raven Thirlmere and we were wakened at 2 in the morning as though our whole bodies were afire. The only ants I've ever viewed with affection, or at least inter-

est, were scampering up and down the rib on pitch 2 of Jackdaw Ridge on Shepherd's (where we found a black jackdaw feather lying heraldically on a greenish slab near the start). As I sized up what was clearly a gymnastic pull-up over an eave, I saw that the rock was alive with ants. It was chastening to see how fearlessly they clambered up each grain and wrinkle of the slate, even when the angle was beyond the vertical. But then, they have six points of contact and an enviable power/weight ratio.

The crags are hanging gardens, luxuriant with thyme and harebells and foxgloves, roseroot and yellow saxifrage and bell heather, in spite of ruthless rooting-up by us lot – what we euphemistically call gardening. Bill Peascod, miner that he was, quite revelled in tearing mats of turf off the likes of Both's Crag near Grange in Borrowdale. When we were putting up Stingray, he wrenched off square yards of grass and flung them off into mid-air. Graham McPhee and company had to wear goggles when they were putting up The Crack on Gimmer in 1928 because their scraping and tearing at vegetation made so much dust. I would rather give the plants a chance and leave them to root and flower and seed on all those well-watered ledges. I saw the Sadgill Wall area of Buckbarrow in a new light when I went up it with Geoffrey Halliday, author of 'Flora of Cumbria'. A doctor from Hawick, climbing there in the Nineties, had reported finding purple saxifrage at the right-hand side, somewhere near the grassy bay. Geoffrey hadn't climbed for decades and he came up the broad, gullied face with an air of stunned bewilderment at the precariousness of it all. We quested left and right, along ledges upholstered with dewy blaeberry. No luck. Perhaps the vivid flower, so plentiful on the western cliffs of Penyghent, was just too scanty hereabouts.

A different kind of frustration awaited me when I went up Dandle Buttress and into the wild garden on its crest, hoping for a feast of blaeberrys. Too late – every outcropping rock was plastered with purple birdlime. Blackbirds and stonechats and perhaps the rarer ring ousel, which I usually see there fleeing off up the steeper watercourses, had got there first and treated the place as their orchard.

The flowers are invariably beautiful, exasperating when they hold moisture or cloak holds, but it's worth it. You just have to be more canny, and possibly wear socks over your PA's, which gives amazing adhesion. I wore out an entire pair on Black Crack, Bowness Knott, Ennerdale, which Bill Peascod (its author) and I enjoyed intensely, although the Guide calls it 'repulsive even when there is no water spouting from its lip'. Another of his, Y-Gully on Haystacks, gave us an epic day in the teeth of the tendency to abuse it because it supports 'too many flowers'. What else can you expect of a gully? The lower pitches are rich in what botanists call flush vegetation. Water has been sluicing down them for thirty or forty thousand years and the only visible rock is so slicked and rounded that it is unclimbable. Tiptoe through flowerbeds, then, sinking your fingers in pillows of



sphagnum moss to find holds, any holds. The gully banks are a slow-motion avalanche of flowers – fragrant meadowsweet, star-flowers of mountain saxifrage, clumps of alpine lady's-mantle which is used in Switzerland to flavour Gruyere. Two hundred feet above, your goal can be seen, a slot framed by heather tall as broom ... Well, if you don't like that kind of thing, keep well away. I can only say that after six hours of slithering and burrowing, and seventy feet of classic 4c bridging up the central chimney, I felt as renewed as I have been by any route at all. Bill, Chris, and I had been immersed in the shaggy stuff of nature itself, unaltered by the – how many? – by the few dozen people who will ever have been there.

Unless, of course, the star we gave it in the 1987 Guide has turned unexpected numbers of climbers onto it. I say 'we' because Rick Graham seemed resigned to my peculiar tastes. The Guidebook Committee were clearly dubious. Ever since the 1949 edition, written by Bill Peascod, nobody has had a good word for the place. Bill wrote that his own route was 'hardly to be recommended because of the poor rock'. By the time of Soper and Allinson words like 'evil' could be used (of neighbouring Warn Ghyll) and 'unattractive' and 'very poor'. For my part I hope I made things clear when I wrote that the climb 'hides a fine hard pitch in its oozing innards' and has 'areas that make Lego look solid'. Not every route can be as clean as Gimmer Crack.

Whatever your opinion of all those pulpy flowers and funguses, who would agree that trees are wholesome and sturdy, and at least as reliable as rock. Who has not felt relief on arriving at the holly on Holly Tree Traverse, Raven Langdale, after the prolonged exposure of pitch 1? Anybody who has climbed it since about 1990, unfortunately, when the slender grey trunk and little flourish of polished leaves lost its grip on the crag at last. Climbers love trees to bits, ring-barking them by abseiling off them, treading the ground bare until the tree has no turf to root in. A small pine on the second stance of Brown Crag Wall on Shepherd's was charred fatally by a climber's stubbed-out cigarette. The yew on pitch 3 of North Crag Eliminate, Castle Rock of Triermain, has had its top worn to a naked spike by the rough usage of people stepping off it to regain the rock. Is this the only classic route in which a tree is an integral section of the climb? Once I was climbing Overhanging Bastion in that same wonderful area with one finger bandaged after a dog-bite had turned septic. The dressing came off as I was stepping diagonally up pitch 4 with the help of the yew roots that jut over the rock shelf like a burnished abstract sculpture. I left a streak of blood on the brown wood. As I coiled at the top, I heard the next climber after me call out excitedly, 'There's blood here!', as though he had found the trace of a climbing accident.

Those venerable, slow-growing yews are the soul of stability, coming so soon after the daredevil swing along a vertical face on creaking flakes. It's supposed to be daft to hug trees. That's what I feel like doing, and sometimes do, when I arrive at them after a stirring or frightening pitch – the birch near the

end of the traverse on pitch 1 of Cleopatra, Buckstone How, for example, or the oaks on the ledges of Trinity Slabs on Wallowbarrow, Dunnerdale. 'Can you use the tree?' a young climbing partner once called up to me. Of course you can: use anything whatsoever on the crag as long as you do your best to cooperate with wild nature and don't leave it irreversibly trashed.

## SUITABLE FOR A GENTLEMAN

With apologies to P.G. Wodehouse

*Dave Gregory*

I'd just climbed out of the roadster and got all the various parcels attached to the fingers and thumbs and was about to give the door a good brisk tap with the shoe toe when I saw the old custard cap coming up the street at specified plod-pace. Nothing for it but to pile it all in again and whiz round to the back of the mews. Staggered up the steps with the digits on the point of fracturing and realised that the latchkey was in the old coat pocket. Just managed to get the forefinger knuckle to the bell push when the door opened in answer to a prayer, revealing Parsons.

"A busy day at the shops today, sir."

"Not half, Parsons, and all Aunt Agatha's fault. Interfering old besom."

"This does not appear to be a suitable manner in which to refer to the Honourable Mrs Fitz-Walkley, particularly as the lady awaits within."

"Not with cousin Matilda, Parsons, spare me that."

"No, sir, the young lady is still apparently still somewhere in the North, at an activity centre, but your aunt, sir, is not completely at peace."

The blister Matilda was the start of the matter. She has graduated from whanging all and sundry with hockey sticks to charging up and down hills lashed about with miles of rope. Aunt Agatha is all too ready to believe that yours truly is next door to Nero in decadence and Matilda's relating all the supposedly bracing things which tummied executives do at her centre is no help at all.

"Algie, stop skulking about in the hall and come in here."

At peace she was not. The whole table and half the carpet were covered with leaflets and brochures advertising the unpleasant things which could happen to the unwary in the countryside.

"Algie, you must make a decision."

"Aunt, I decided not to emigrate; not to enter the President's Putter; to send a subscription to Friends of the Earth; not to order two cases of Yugoslavian port, although I must admit that Parsons had a strong say in the last item; not a bad haul of decisions, eh."

"Stop flannelling Algie. About this centre for your executive course. You must choose. I will not be put off."

A little more effort needed to gain the upper hand seemed necessary.

"Aunt," I countered, "Christian Longworth has put me onto a fellow, who knows a fellow who was talking to a member of The Alpine Club." That

shook her. She thinks that all my friends are intellectually lightweight, tenpence to the shilling and all that.

"What, Algie, has this ..."

"Now, now Aunt, listen. You aren't in hurry are you? No, well. This fellow in The Alpine Club has given him the name of a Mountain Guide, a really first-class chap, who will take one on for a week. Really put one through it. I have signed on. We drive up tomorrow."

"Parsons," (who was serving the Earl Grey) "see that he keeps up to the mark."

"I fancy, Madam, that it will be an invigorating week."

At which she exited leaving half a forest of leaflets to fill the neighbourhood recycling bin.

"Am I to pack today's purchases, sir?"

"Indeed, Parsons, the whole boiling."

"Including these, sir."

"Not half, pretty good, ch" And indeed they were, a really professional-looking pair of salopettes.

"They are not, sir, the sort of trousering one associates with a gentleman."

"Everyone's wearing them, Parsons, everyone."

"That oi polloi have adopted them, sir, is not in their favour, and, if I might suggest, sir, they clash with these violet rubber slippers which I see you have purchased. And are they not manufactured somewhere in the North, sir?"

"You are too metropolitan, Parsons. Some good things come out of the North. Cumberland sausages. Whisky. York hams. Hadrian's Wall. Golf. Good place the North, and the slippers are rock boots, parsons, rock boots, and they are Spanish."

"The trousers, sir, must they be yellow?"

"Have to be yellow, Parsons, easy to pick out from a helicopter. Special cloth. Stops the rain getting in and lets the sweat out."

"Perspiration, sir. Although I hadn't thought that perspiration was actually likely to enter the week's activities."

"It might, Parsons, it might, but away and pack, we must be early abroad tomorrow."

Sparkling run. Sunny day, hood down, all three litres at full chat, in and out of the lanes, tophole GT stuff. In the Lake District in no time. Hotel meets with Parsons' approval, but not, it appears, all the clientele.

"There are persons in this hotel," he said, "who will not dress for dinner."

And he was spot on. The place had a resident's bar where I was to meet my guide for a bit of preliminary organisation. Quite a salubrious watering hole, even if the clientele looked dead, or were dead, or were waiting to die. In addition there was a bar used by the passing public into which one can get a

squint on the way to the dining room. A different kettle. All human life and all that. Old colonels, young dolly birds, guards' cravats, denims even. There was a character with St Vitus' Dance. Old jeans with holes in. Standing first on one leg, then the other, waving his arms about, spilling the old amber fluid in all directions. I commented on him to Parsons and shortly the report came in.

"The wine waiter, sir, an old acquaintance, informs me that there is one of these centres nearby. The gentleman with the affliction is apparently an instructor in the climbing of rocks and the actions which we took to be involuntary concomitants of his medical condition are merely his attempt to recount the movements involved in some recent ascent. I would not, sir, like you to become like him."

"Parsons, the very thought is an insult. In recompense you may cozen some of the hotel's oldest port out of your acquaintance, and lay out the Gore-Tex trouserings for tomorrow's fray."

"If I must, sir, though it grieves me sorely."

The morrow started well. Sun streaming through the old windows. Parsons got the kitchen activated with the morning potta. Breakfast well above par. Bacon, link of the old Cumberland, sample of kidney, black pudding, hot crisp toast, thick-cut orange. The old Algie was pretty well fortified when he sallied forth for his day on the hills.

What a change in a man a few hours can accomplish. I tottered back a shattered man, a shadow, the white flag flying; in a word, done.

"A heavy day," said Parsons, easing off the Trionics, which had, but that morning, been parade ground mirrors, and were now scuffed and muddied, fit only for Oxfam.

"Parsons," I managed, "were I not near death I could make strong men weep with an account of my day. That guide is a graduate of the S.S. He has dragged me through waterfalls, dangled me over abysses, dropped stones on my head. The helmet, Parsons, is ruined. It has a scrape down it like Bond Street. The rock boots are a shambles ..."

"The yellow trousering, if I may say so, sir, seems a little the worse for wear."

"The fissures in these parts, Parsons, are occupied by a species of bush with steel talons, lying in wait for the unwary passer-by. The agony of hearing that superb material rip under the onslaught. And the guide, Parsons, made me carry a small steel hook for extracting curious bits of metal from out of crevices in the rock. This hook is designed to catch hold of your trousers as you raise your knee and slice them as you lower it. The salopettes are beyond repair."

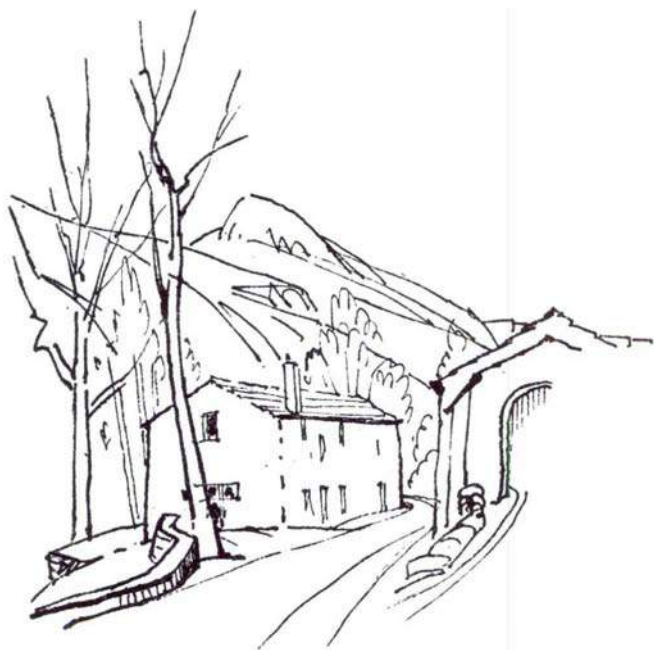
"Perfidy, sir. The, ah, salopettes are indeed past their best. Shall I find them a suitable home?"

"Do what you will, Parsons, I shall wear them no more."

Indeed I did not for on the morrow the old stalwart laid out the heather-mixture plus twos, last worn at Glencagles. I woke early with an appetite like a mountain leopard's. After a pre-breakfast stroll round the lawns I felt as good as new. Parsons had worked wonders with the Trionics which reflected the sky again. The rock boots had come up well under the old suede brush and Algie was in fine feather when he got round to sallying; quite the young squire off to inspect the estate. The old Blackshirt was a spot surprised to see me surface for a second session in the torture chamber and gave me a gentle day. A pretty self-satisfied customer went past the public bar to the dining room that night. I sneaked a look at the exhibits. All pretty much as before except that the character with Saint Vitus' Dance had a different pair of trousers. Newer than the others but torn and rent in several places.

The blighter was a blaze of saffron from waist to wellingtons.

What some people will wear.



## BMC LAKES YOUTH MEETS

*Ron Kenyon*

I have been involved with the Lakes Committee for the BMC for more years than I wish to admit. Am I a sad person or someone trying to help our sport? Hopefully the latter. Many of us have many years of climbing under our belts and many memories, both good and bad, of the crags and climbs we have done. When in one's teens there is an unknown future waiting there. For those going into a climbing hobby or life this can be a very dangerous time with new, often simple techniques, to be learned. Many years ago, like many others I started on the likes of Brown Slabs and worked up the grades with each – Diff to V Diff then to Severe, VS, HVS and Extreme a major hurdle. Under the guidance of others and experience gained we worked up through the grades – as well as getting used to placing gear and the attendant dangers. For young climbers nowadays climbing walls tend to rule with initially safe protection from bolts and a controlled environment. Many do not progress beyond this point and climbing IS climbing walls – for others the sports routes of Spain, Kalimnos, Portland and Norper Scar are the limits – and for others just having a bouldering mat will be sufficient. Trad climbing is often an unknown or a different sport to consider. I have been concerned at assisting young climbers to move onto trad climbing.

During the late 1990s the idea of arranging wall to crag courses was mooted at BMC Lakes meetings and from this the BMC Lakes Youth Meets evolved. Unlike climbing courses these were more like a climbing meet drawing together a group of youngsters from 14 to 18 and a group of adults with a depth of experience behind them. Surprisingly the BMC went along with this idea – plus attendant insurance cover. Dave Staton as chair of the Lakes Committee was very much behind the idea – stemming from his past involvement with Youth Clubs and young climbers. Initially, Mike Gibson also gave his help for the weekend. A venue was needed and here the Fell & Rock came up trumps by making available Rawhead, which is a fabulous base for a climbing weekend. It has given a great insight into the hut system of the club and other clubs in the UK. I drew on my contacts in the climbing world to call on many to help. Some declined but many went with the idea. Over the years arms were twisted or, with memories of the previous years meets, volunteers were sucked in to help.

We were able to attract up to approximately twenty youngsters for each of the weekends – the initial idea was to have novices and assist in showing them basics for crag climbing. However we realised that with our limited qualifications (usually none!) we should be there to help to widen their crag

experience and show new locations, crags and also techniques – not to teach. In this time of litigation and safety I had concern in this area. Yet when one thinks that many of these youngsters could be going out on the crags on their own, with no-one looking over their shoulders to give comment or suggestion on what to do – having an adult along accelerates their learning. For most it was a weekend of the adults leading up the various routes, showing them new crags, their belay and climbing systems, with talk about their climbing experiences and hopefully engendering a feeling a fun, excitement, safety and control in their climbing.

The meets were the weekend prior to the start of the summer holidays and were advertised to those who had entered the Cumbria Bouldering League, via the Walls, through school groups and word of mouth. As many suitable adults were found as possible – we always managed to have nearly a one to one ratio. Youngsters applied for the weekend and were teamed up with an adult of a similar or appropriate ability. The format was to meet on a Friday evening at 7.30pm and everyone was introduced to one another and the plan and rules for the weekend outlined. Safety was first – do not climb beyond one's ability – the adults would normally be leading – be conscious of the weather – climb routes appropriate for the day – keep off traverses – have at least two teams per crag – have telephone links (helped by mobiles) – etc. etc. There was then a rush off to the Langdale Boulders or slack lining in front of the cottage to use up some energy.

Saturday and Sunday were then available for climbing – on Saturday many were up with the lark ready for action – Sunday was not necessarily the case after a full day on the Saturday.

The choice of crags is, as we know, enviable – Dow, Gimmer, Bowfell and Pavey are the main high crags – and lower down are Raven Crag, Raven – Walthwaite, White Ghyll, Wallabarrow, and Hodge Close. There was often discussion about the crags – many unknown to the youngsters – and many tales recalled by the adults of past climbs there. The adults needed to assess what their 'buddy' wanted to do and where they should go.

Saturday morning would dawn hopefully with sunshine. Enthusiasm and energy at a high level and off the groups go. Due to rain sometimes B alternatives were devised with the likes of scrambling in Dungeon Ghyll, Middlefell Buttress, Trowbarrow or Kendal Climbing Wall – but with the sun shining the crags beckoned.

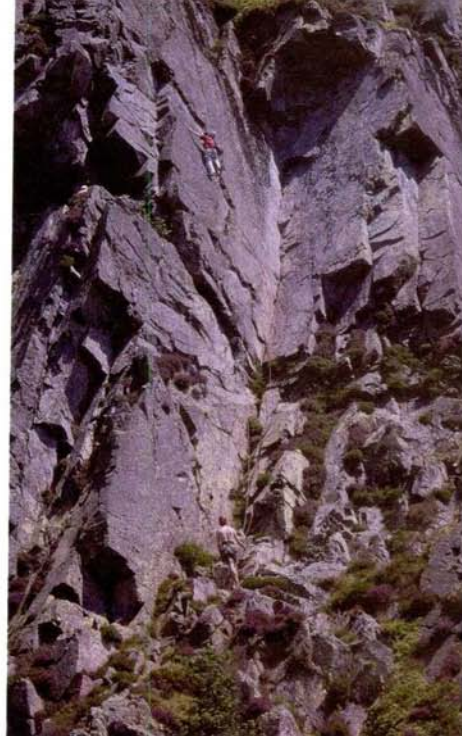
There are many memories of all the attendees over the weekend, and the following especially come to mind –

- Gimmer Crag is always a draw (especially for Steve Reid) and one year saw myself with Jack Brodie climbing Gimmer Crack – Jack's first multi-





Simon Platt on Tiger Traverse, Dow

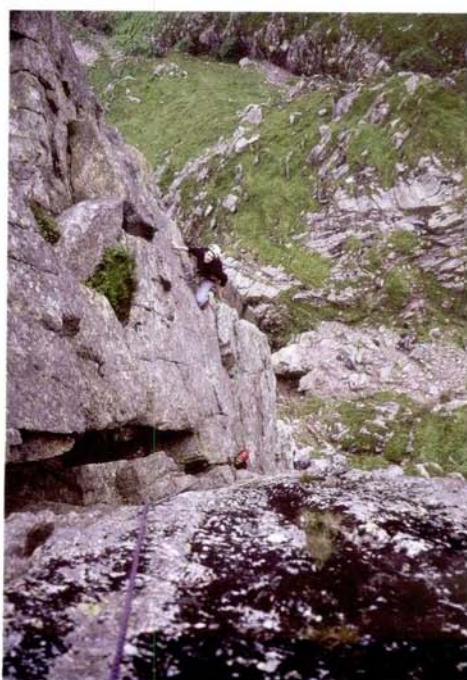


Daniel Varian on Waste Not, Want Not

George Ulrich on The Needle, Wrynose



Emma Twyford on Gimmer String



pitch route – and next door Angela Soper and Emma Twyford on K.G. and Gimmer String. Emma was intrigued with the photograph of a much younger Angela on the traverse of K.G. in the then new Langdale guide.

- Dow Crag was extremely popular with its vast array of routes. Simon Platt and myself, with John Temple had a day climbing Murrays Route, Giant's Corner and Murrays Direct with the Tiger Traverse start after which a very tired Simon quickly went to sleep in the car back to the hut. A year later Simon returned, with the Youth Meet, to Dow with a tiger suit and dressed up to repeat the Tiger Traverse – to the amusement of all.
- Another Dow day saw myself with Matthew Murgatroyd and Tom Vaughan climbing two neighbouring routes of differing style. Black Wall for a leader is a serious proposition but for the second is reminiscent of a climbing wall – but the supposedly easier Hopkinson's Crack gives a totally new experience for the wall trained youngsters with its awkward crack climbing.
- James McHaffie came to the initial meets and a meeting with Dave Birkett saw him and Robert Gledhill heading for East Buttress and Trinity, Leverage and Hells Groove whilst Dave was working on one of his super routes on the crag - a memorable day for Robert.
- Black Crag, above Wrynose is a super mini crag which faces south, with excellent rock and a series of short routes of all grades making it an ideal crag for a group. The ascents of the easy Needle give an excellent lead and Glass Slipper gives a taste of harder routes.
- Daniel Varian teamed up with Dave Menadue as the "hard" team and Daniel proceeded to flow up all the E1's he could find on these new crags, for him, and finished off with a flawless ascent of Palladin – Oh to be 15, with talent !
- Taking George Ullrich and Matthew Murgatroyd up to Pavey, we stood below Capella. Matthew had not done anything like this before and viewed it with trepidation – however they both enjoyed this great route. We followed Colin Downer with Robert Dean and Simon Platt and we were followed by Nick Colton and Jonathan Freeman (who had just done Man of Straw and Slab Route in White Ghyll). We then all continued up Golden Slipper followed by an abseil back to Jack's Rake – quite a day !

At the end of the Saturdays' activities we returned to the hut for a communal meal where all recalled their day. Later on we usually viewed

slides from various people. One memorable evening we had four sets varying from Alpine routes around Zermatt from Tony Gladstone; Greenland from Steve Reid; and Joshua Tree from myself – however this was more than topped by Dave Birkett showing slides of his latest hard routes in the Lakes and also climbs in South Africa.

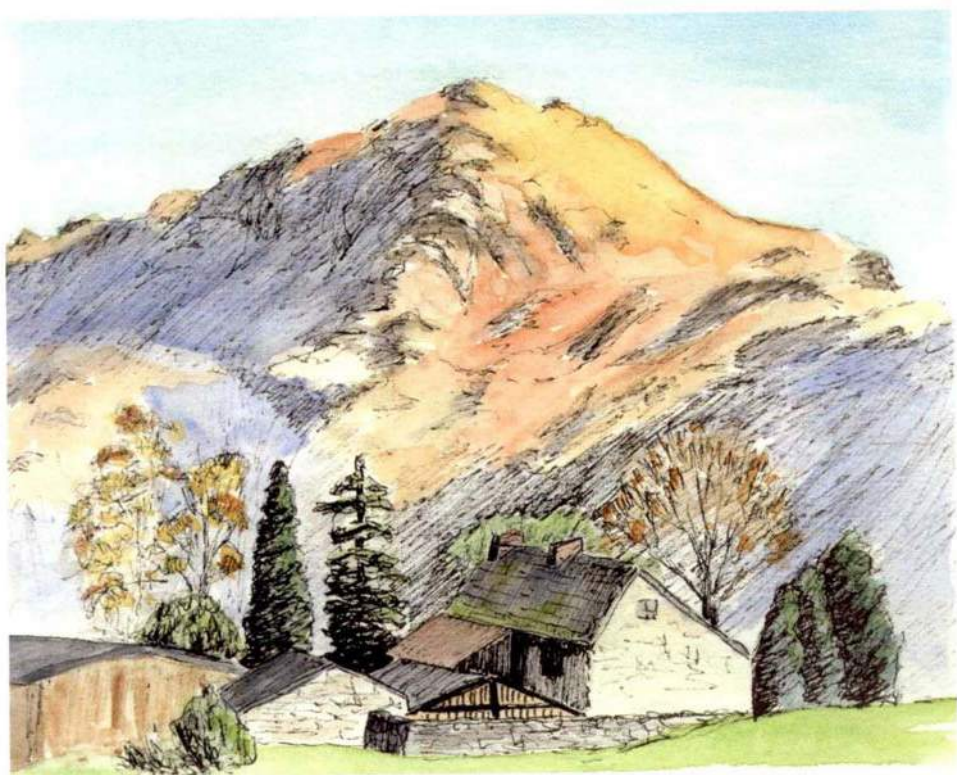
I hope that over time the many youngsters and adults who came along for the weekend gained something – new experiences in the mountains; introduction to new crags; introduction to new friends; experience of staying in a climbing hut; an introduction to the Fell & Rock, and much more.

The weekend had evolved and in 2004 Nick Colton from the BMC looked closely at the overall control and came up with a good set of guidelines for such a meet – with Event Coordinator, Climbing Coordinator and Welfare Officer. This was good basis for the future but after six years and with other pressures building up it was, sadly, decided to call a day on the event in 2005. This year, in place of the Youth Meet, a bouldering masterclass with Andy Earl was arranged – though in the future there are plans to go back to the original concept and arrange for wall to crag courses, but undertaken by qualified instructors/centres – it is essential to help with that transition both from a safety point of view and general development of trad climbing.

It is vital to show youngsters what the crags have to offer – I enjoy bolts and bouldering, however it is important to promote trad climbing on our crags. It is also important to open up the club and let these youngster see what the Fell & Rock can offer with its hut system and all arrangements. The average age of the Club is getting older, and anything the Club (that means all its members) can do to encourage youngsters to join must be a good thing. The enthusiasm and growing competence of the youngster coming on the weekend was very pleasing – two have joined the Fell & Rock (one has joined the Climbers' Club) and hopefully others will follow. The Club has attracted some youngish members but the 'up to 30' group is very small. Can I give the members a challenge to get the number of members, up to age 30, by 2010, to a total of 50 !! A good basis and core for the future development of the Club. Look around and find the youngsters – don't just go out with the same old friends but find some young buddies and encourage them and also absorb their enthusiasm.

Many people have helped over the time – some mentioned above – and I am grateful for all their assistance. I have certainly met many new friends and keep bumping into them – in climbing shops; at climbing walls; at fell races; in caves (even) and on the crags. It was very sad to end the Youth Meets which were a bit unique – but thanks again to all who helped and to the Fell & Rock for the use of Rawhead.

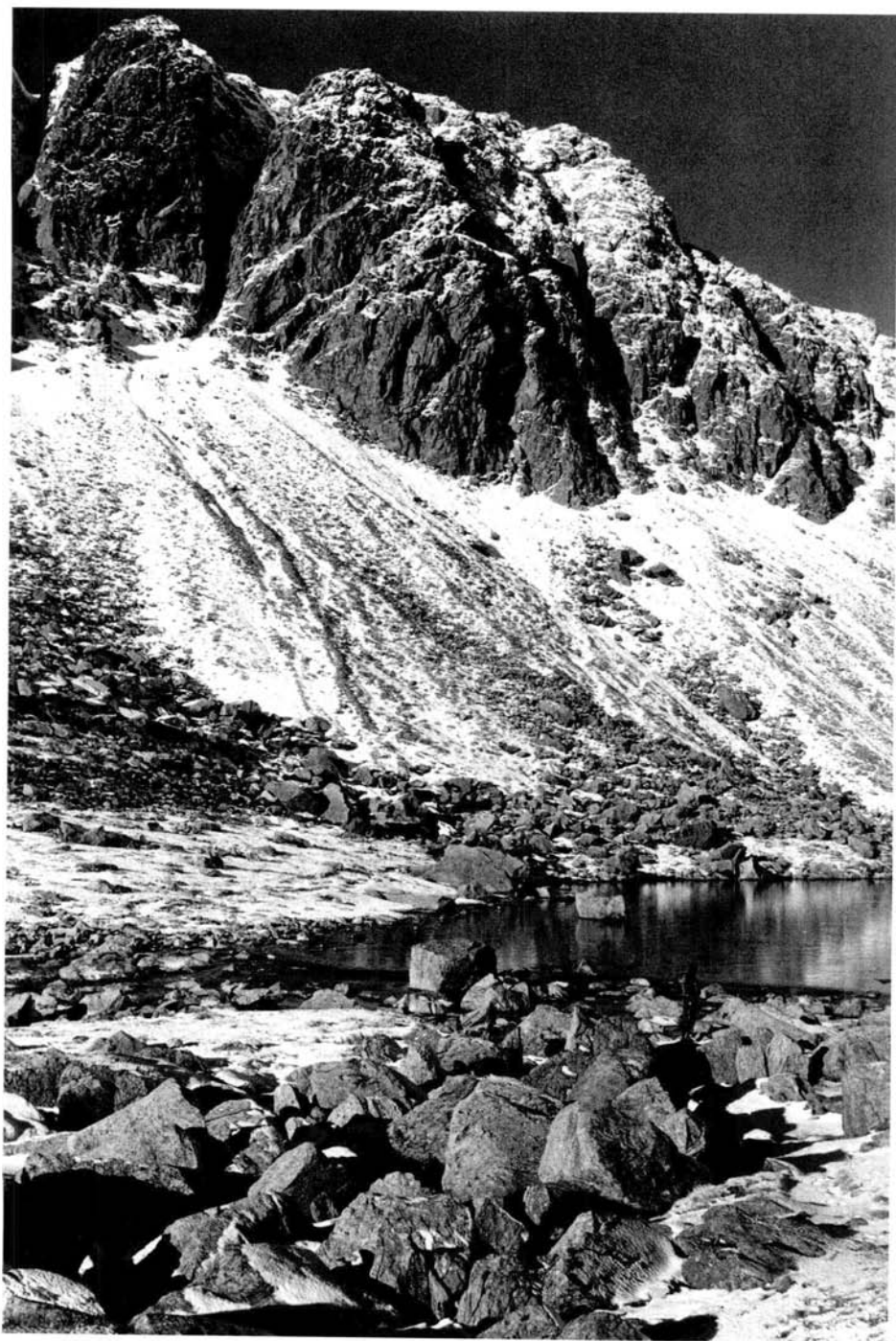
## MEMBERS' ILLUSTRATIONS



Autumn light on Gill Bank Farm and Great Howe, Eskdale

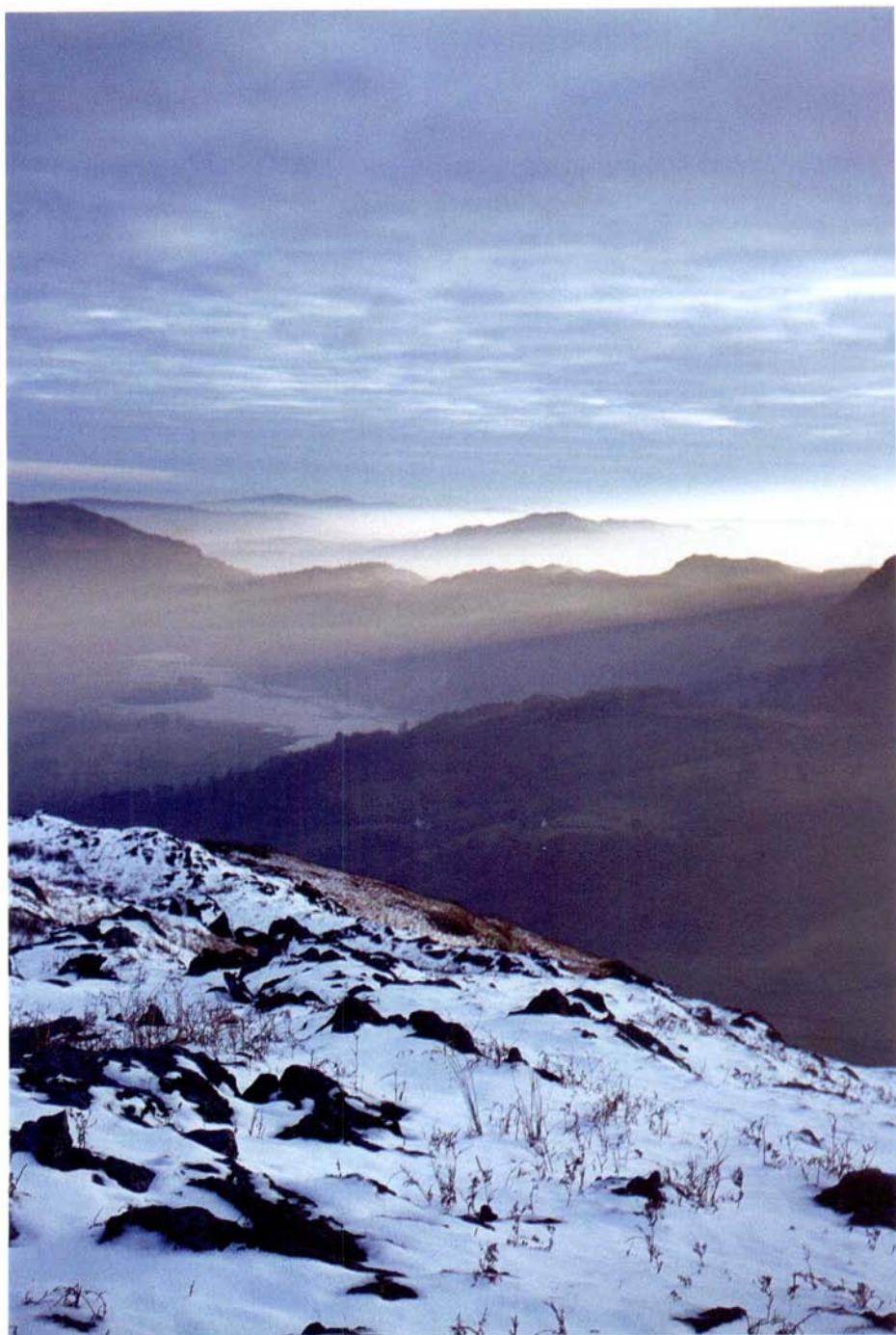
*Lesley Comstive*





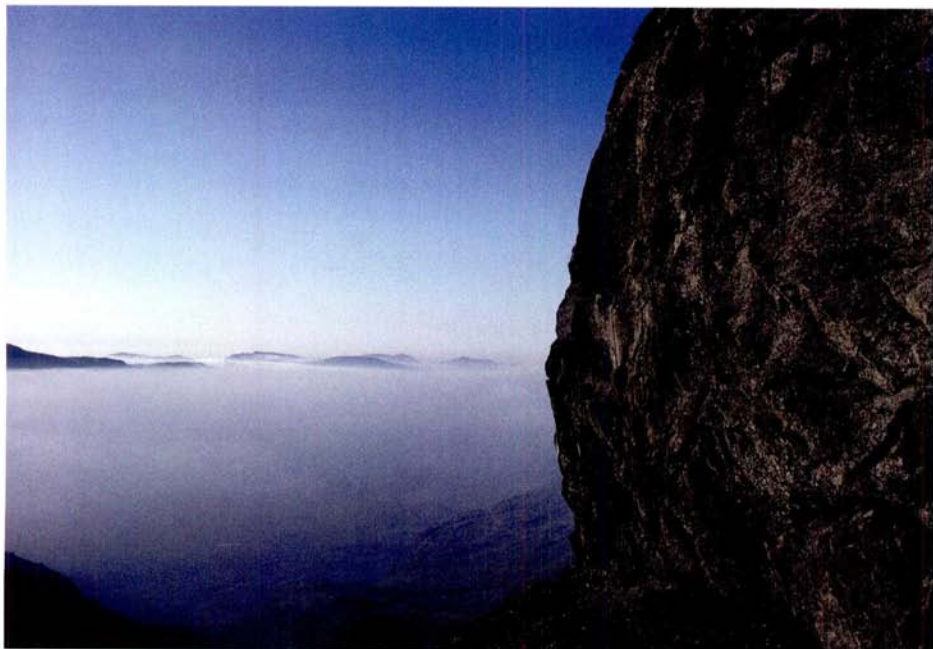
Dow Crag

*Eric Shaw*



South from Helm Crag

*W A Comstive*

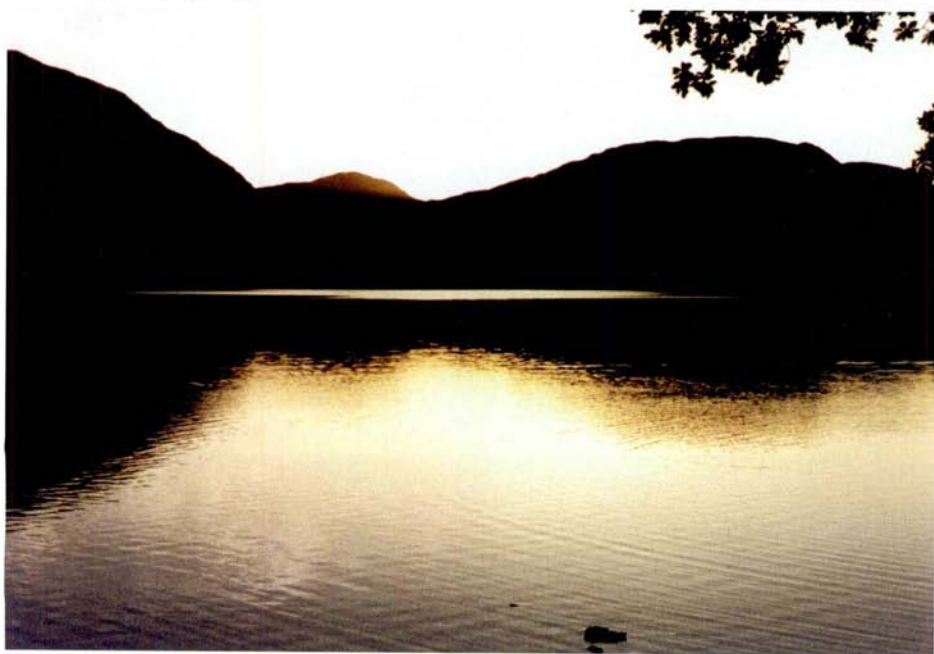


East Buttress, Scafell

*Al Phizacklea*

Below: Buttermere

*Helen Killick*







Derwentwater

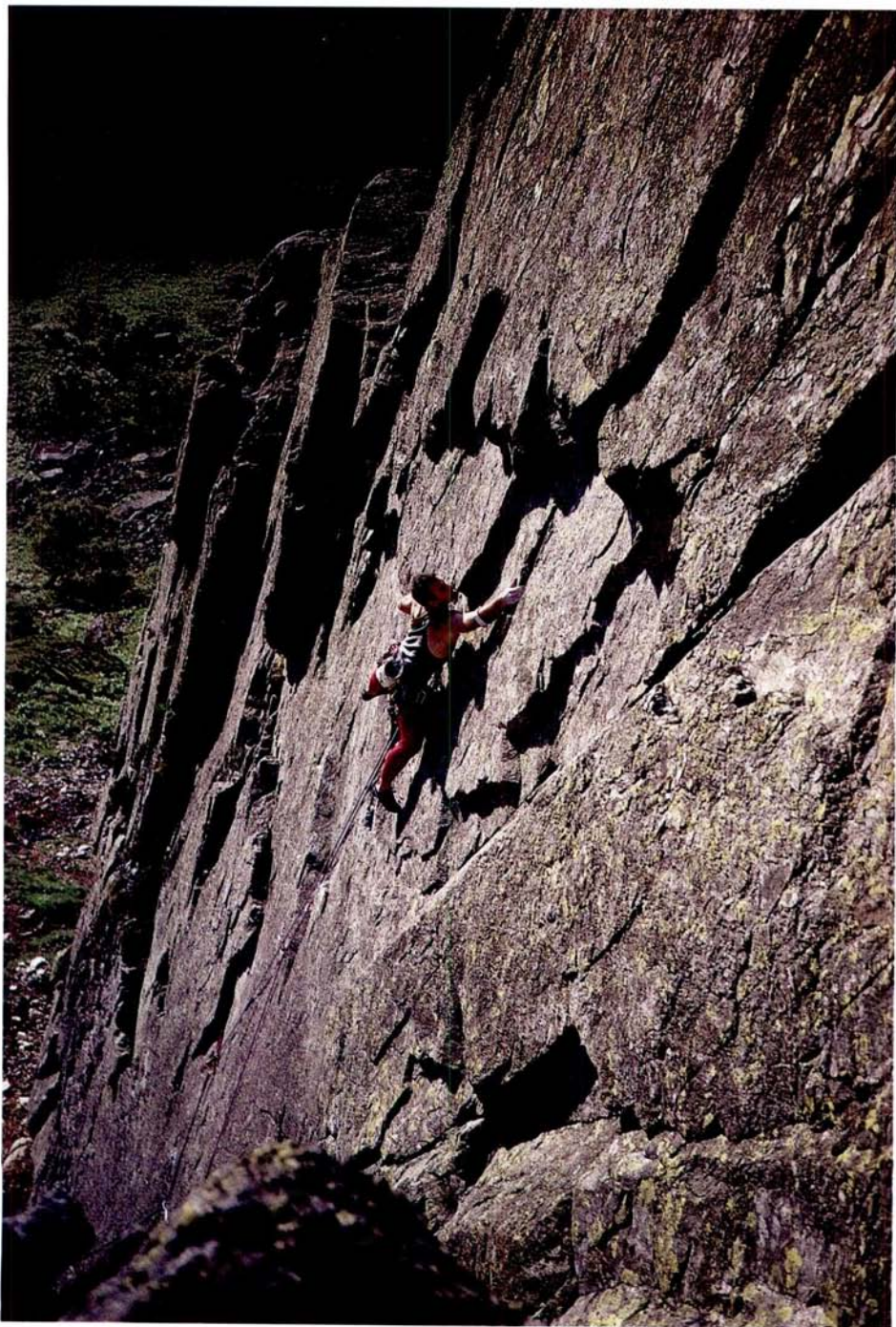
*Doug Elliott*

Below: Wastwater

*Paul Exley*

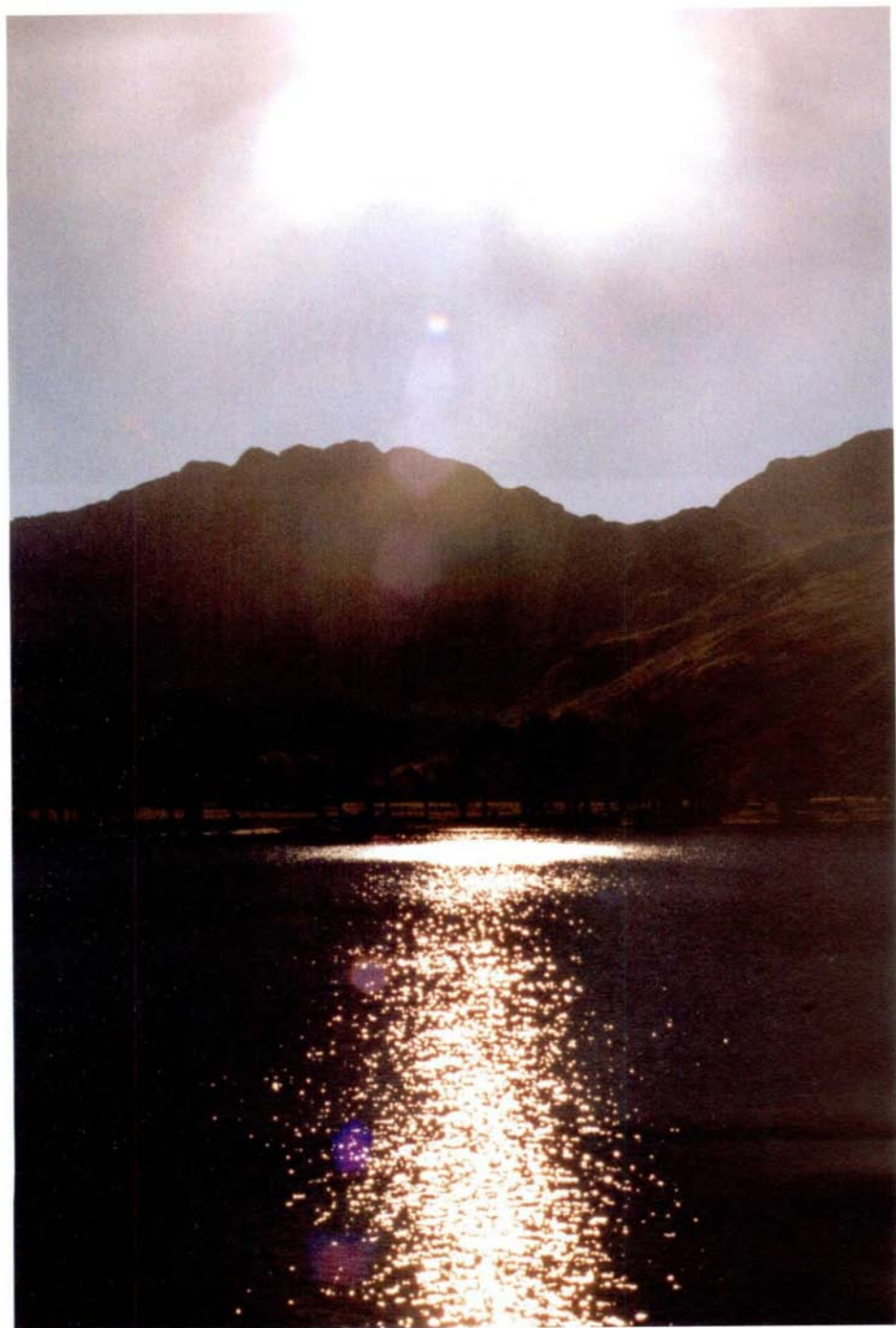






Don Domini on Bloodhound

*Ron Kenyon*



Haystacks

*George Watkins*

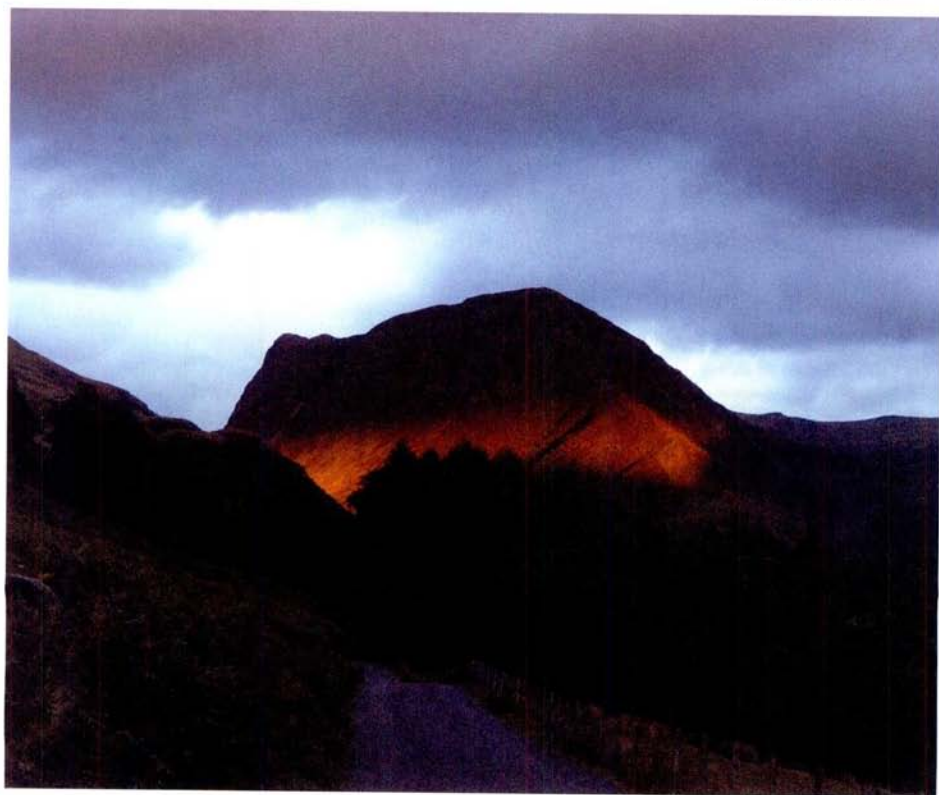




Ullswater

*George Harris*

Below: Fleetwith Pike

*John Holden*



Napes Needle

*John McM Moore*

## A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE FELL & ROCK JOURNAL

A miscellany of pieces from the Journal

*George Watkins*

With a limit of 30,000 words and a mandate to concentrate on the Lake District, it was impossible to do justice to the full range of material that lies in 100 years of the Journal, so I didn't try. After all, the ration had to be an average of 300 words per year. Many distinguished writers, and many distinguished themes, were too ample to be reduced to snippets. Then I did not wish to duplicate the work of other contributors to this Centenary Journal, so I have excluded pieces about club history, guide books, huts, and history of climbing. Even so, I have applied scissors brutally, and paste liberally, to almost all of the pieces I have chosen. The gaps are marked by ... and my comments by *[comment]*. Starting with 'Once Upon a Time' the pieces are grouped under a series of sub-headings, but to suit editorial constraints no contents or index is provided. I beg the forgiveness of past and present contributors whose work I have so maltreated.

### ONCE UPON A TIME

#### Coleridge Observes the Lake District

Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the Lake District – a New Appraisal

*E.M. Turner (1958)*

See Coleridge, then, setting out on that Sunday morning [1 August, 1802] so long ago, as a walker in many ways resembling his modern counterpart:

On Sunday Augt. 1<sup>st</sup> – ½ after 12 I had a Shirt, cravat, 2 pair of stockings, a little paper & half a dozen Pens, a German Book (Voss's Poems), a little Tea & Sugar, with my Night Cap, packed up in my natty green oil-skin, neatly squared, and put into my *net* Knapsack / and the Knap-sack on my back & the Besom stick in my hand ... off I sallied.

Coleridge obviously believed in travelling lightly. And how up-to-date does the reference to oil-skins sound! ...

...*[In another letter]* we .... find a particularly interesting account of a visit to Wordsworth at Grasmere, in a letter to Humphrey Davy, the chemist, written on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 1800:

We drank tea the night before I left Grasmere on the Island in that lovely lake, our kettle swung over the fire hanging from the branch of a Fir Tree, and as I lay & saw the woods, & mountains, & lake all trembling, & as it were *idealized thro'* the subtle smoke which rose up from the clear red embers of the fir-apples which we had collected. Afterwards we made a glorious Bonfire on the Margin, by

some alder bushes, whose twigs heaved & sobbed in the uprushing column of smoke – & the image of the Bonfire, & of us that danced round it ... the Image of this in a Lake smooth as that sea, to whose waves the Son of God had said, PEACE!

The poetic cast of thought, the sensitivity in description, are all here ...

### **The Greatest Liar in Cumberland Wasdale Head in "Auld Will" Ritson's Time**

*George Seatree (1911)*

The subject of these lines was born in 1808 at Row Foot, Wasdale Head, then a small farmstead, which he afterwards inherited from his grandfather – a Bill Ritson – the property having come into the family by purchase from the Tysons ...

... Of Ritson's early youthful days not very much is to be gleaned, but he grew into a fine type of dalesman, tall, muscular, heavy boned, and athletic. In the wrestling rings of West Cumberland he was known as a powerful local champion and exponent of the ever popular Cumberland and Westmorland sport

.... His favourite pastime was undoubtedly hunting, of which he was passionately fond .... In later life, when Ritson entered on the duties of landlord of the Huntsman's Inn, he was a keen enough hunter to form and maintain an effective pack of fox hounds of his own, and never were mountain hounds more deftly handled than were his ...

... Ritson's hunting proclivities and experiences gave him a complete knowledge of the West Cumberland fells and foothills – a knowledge which in later years he turned to excellent account, for he became one of the most trusted and popular guides in the district ...

... As a "statesman" farming his own land, he had the reputation of being a shrewd and industrious manager and worker, ever foremost in all weathers to take his share alike of the arduous fell shepherding, or the easier but equally necessary home work of his dalehead holding ...

... Prior to Row Foot becoming a licensed house (about 1856) the building was small and very primitive. When Ritson, who by this time had married his wife Dinah – one of the Fletchers of Nether Wasdale – conceived the idea of supplying tourists with ham and eggs, etc., he built at the south end of the farm a small wing, which he believed would provide ample accommodation for all the tourists and travellers likely to come his way .... With the assistance of his hard-working help-mate the Inn rapidly grew in custom and popularity .... Eminent men of letters .... found Wasdale to be an unspoiled place in a situation of uncommon grandeur .... *[and]* in Ritson .... a willing abetter in their sports and frolics .... Never was he at a loss when appealed to on any conceivable subject. Be the topic under discussion agricultural, sporting, or political, the landlord

was ever ready with the last word, which was given at times with perhaps a little more emphasis than authenticity ....

... Ritson reigned supreme. He was landlord, waiter, and customer by turns. As the nights wore on the fun became fast and furious, the company being kept in fits of laughter by his quick-witted jokes, banter and racy stories ... My recollection of Ritson's own yarns or "lees" is that they were .... much more calculated to astonish and amuse than to deceive ...

...Auld Will and Dinah retired from active business in 1879, and the inn was let to the late Daniel Tyson. The old warrior died in 1890, and was interred in Nether Wasdale churchyard, the faithful companion of his life having been taken about twelve months earlier.

### **Wasdale Headquarters Middle Row, Wasdale**

*E. Wood-Johnson (1983)*

[Accommodation in farmhouses and small hotels was extremely important to the Club in the days before Club huts.]

... a friend put us in touch with Jock Eden-Smith who lent us club *Journals* and suggested that we book at Mrs. Wilsons, Middle Row, Wasdale Head for the following Easter – 1925. Until then we had known nothing about graded climbing and very little about the Fell and Rock Club.

When we entered Middle Row for dinner that first night we were surprised to find that we were in the company of some of the elite of the immediate post-war climbing world. Until then they had been simply names in the *Journals*.

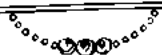
The table was covered with a white cloth and there were pots of flowering currant along the middle. They looked beautiful in the soft lamp-light. The others were at table and had thoughtfully left us three seats at the far end near the fire. They were all climbers and obviously old friends, and it was with great pleasure that we listened to their quiet and unassuming conversation.

At the far end sat H.M. Kelly .... a very powerfully built man ... with a dark, upturned moustache, which made him look like a brigand out of *Carmen* ... Next to Kelly at the table came his great friend J.H. Doughty, of Pickwickian appearance and manner ....

The masterful Editor, R.S.T. Chorley .... was across the table, half-left from me. He was a short-sighted, scholarly-looking young man wearing thick spectacles. His appearance belied his toughness and ability for he was a first-class and resolute climber ....

# WASDALE.

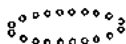
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“There are no hills  
Like the Wasdale Hills  
When Spring comes up the Dale.”

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The Switzerland of the British Isles.  
The Mecca of the Climber and Mountaineer.



## WASTWATER HOTEL

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AND

## Rowhead Private Hotel

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Within easy distance of  
SCAFELL, PILLAR, GABLE, STY HEAD.



APPLY TO J. R. WHITING,  
WASDALE HEAD, CUMBERLAND  
(Via GOSFORTH).

Telegrams :  
“Via Wasdale.”

Station :  
Seascale (Furness Railway)



There was Mrs. Eden-Smith, whose elfin looks, Eton cropped dark hair, bright eyes and gentle charm made her look more like Jock's sister than his mother .... Directly opposite me was a powerfully built man of saintly appearance, R.B. Graham, who should have gone to Everest in 1924

... Middle Row .... was by no means dependent upon visitors for its existence. It was a small house but the biggest and most efficient farm at Wasdale Head. In addition to over two thousand sheep it had cattle, pigs, a horse and poultry to care for. At the same time the Wilsons and their helpers provided accommodation for visitors, particularly climbers, and looked upon them as their friends – and had done for many years.

### **Journey to Wasdale, Old Style Nine Days from a Diary**

*F.H.F. Simpson (1951)*

Thursday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1931

Changing at Preston is always a pleasant vexation. The atmosphere is one of surprise; anxious glances across the Ribble for the train, announced in a chalk message by an unknown hand, as twenty-seven minutes late at Warrington. At Carnforth one may relax. This is journey's end only for the few. There is a wide sky, limestone outcrops in yellow sun, a fresh prowling wind and hungry sparrows in the track ballast.

We ambled into Cumberland, the dialect of station staffs altering pleasantly. Black Combe wore a heavy cloud cap .... At Ravenglass the smell of seaweed and the roar of surf behind golden sand dunes .... Lunch beneath the fir trees at Santon Bridge, where wild flowers were already opening .... Bright images in the lake, inverted scree fans, crag and sky. The granite surface of the enchanting road is not for the breaking in of new boots.

*[The journey must have been Blackpool – Preston ... change ... main line Preston – Carnforth ... change ... Carnforth – Ravenglass ... change ... "Li'le Ratty" Ravenglass – Santon Bridge ... walk to Wasdale Head.]*

### **Billiard Fives**

*Bentley Beetham (1957)*

The game, played on the old dilapidated billiard table at the Wasdale Head Hotel, was for either two or four players, singles or doubles .... Doubles were played to twenty-one up and singles to seven up. A toss of the coin decided who should be 'in', and he, the server, then stood at the bottom of the table and slung the ball against the top cushion; as soon as it had thereafter

struck the top left-hand cushion it was in play. The receiver stood on the left side below the middle pocket. In a foursome the server's partner took position above the receiver whose second was opposite on the right-hand side of the table. The ball used was an ordinary billiard ball and it had to be struck with the flat of the palm of the hand; it was an offence to grip the ball with the fingers except in service...

... The server was allowed two services; if the second one was a fault the opponents were 'in.' The object was to put the ball into the top left pocket; if it went into any other pocket it counted against the man who last touched it. A point could also be scored by the ball rebounding from the top cushion and reaching the bottom one, either direct or via a side cushion, without the opponent reaching it ...

... In fiercely fought games the ball was often sent with all the might of the sender to the top cushion. If it cleared this it hurtled against the panelling or door at the end of the room. All windows in the room were defended with wire netting ...

... Sometime between 1929 and 1930 the table was removed, the wire screens taken down and the room converted into a lounge. The game is now a memory, but the evidence still remains in the presence of a large number of shallow indentations on the back of the lounge door, made by the billiard ball when it was swept off the table in many a wild shot for the pocket.

## MINDING THE SHEEP

### Salv-ing (not Salvation) The Salving House

*F.H.F. Simpson (1954)*

Graham Sutton, who has accumulated such an extensive knowledge of the District, denied any knowledge of its history [*The Salving House, at Rosthwaite*] but disclosed considerable familiarity with the process which gives the building its name. He explains that the primary use of the building was abandoned largely as a result of the growth of modern methods of caring for the Herdwick flocks. In former times the sheep were saued [= *salved*] from mid-October to mid-November, the operation thus corresponding to the present day 'last dipping'. Four quarts of tar and sixteen pounds of butter saued thirty-five to forty sheep at a cost of sixpence for each sheep. The wool was parted and the saue worked in with thumb and forefinger, in parallel, until the whole fleece was treated. A good man did ten to twelve sheep a day and was

paid twopence for each sheep. This process was not replaced by any system of dipping until about 1840.

While farmers had the choice, sauving was locally preferred to dipping – for Herdwicks, at any rate – and did not disappear until 1905 when the Board of Agriculture made dipping against scab compulsory. From this it may be inferred that sauving was also a measure against scab .... The wool manufacturers .... were glad of the new methods, because the wool cleaning process was cheapened and simplified. Graham Sutton explains that either 'Salving' or 'Sauving' is correct. Even today the shepherds use the latter, and another form, 'Sarving.'

### **Economics of Sheep Farming, 1947 Present and Future of Fellside Farming**

*S.H. Cole (1947)*

Transport, bad times and then the war have encouraged Fell-siders to sell milk. In the hands of a few conscientious owner-occupiers and tenants this steady source of income has enabled some farms to be modernised and put into good heart [*but*] fell sheep stocks have suffered seriously as a result of milk-selling .... Ewes and lambs have to be turned out to the Fell much earlier in the Spring to clear the fields for the cows and to clear the mowing ground for hay grass – for good hay is the first essential of winter milk production. As a result the ewes do not milk well and lambs do not grow as they should ...

... In the short space of twenty years wages have risen from a few shillings a week to ten times that amount and, as a consequence, the fell-siders' sons and daughters leave home to seek the better wages their own small farms cannot pay ...

... The present position is one of bewildering change in an incredibly short space of time. The greatest anomalies are everywhere to be seen on Fellside. Some few prescient men who have made specialities such as pedigree stock of high standing are making money fast – as are others who have been fortunate in finding themselves upon large cheap fell farms with large flocks of ewes drawing Hill Sheep Subsidy or others drawing Hill Cattle Subsidy on wild cheap farms.

But the sober fact is that most fellside farms would not be self-supporting at the present time without these subsidies – and especially without visitors. The Fellsider was quick to cater for the visitors, who have not only proved a source of much needed revenue, but a much-needed link of mutual liking and understanding with the outside world.

## Primitive Vulpicide Fox Traps, Borrans and Goose Bields

*Peter Fleming (1996)*

Prior to the introduction of organised foxhound packs in Lakeland during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was common practice to lure foxes into specially constructed stone traps which were usually, but not always, sited on or close to a "borran", which is best described as a large boulderfield at the base of a crag beneath which there are often small caves and deep recesses where foxes live and breed and where they go to "earth" if pursued ...

... The word comes from the Old English "burgaesen", meaning a burial ground or ancient heap of stones, which suggests that they are man-made features. To apply this name to a fox's earth is not strictly correct. The term I would prefer to apply is "bield", which is a Cumbrian dialect word for a shelter or animal den ...

... Most of the stone fox traps were probably constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when hunters were largely occupied with stag hunting. .... The stone traps were built on the principle of an igloo, but without an entrance and with the inner walls overhanging considerably all round, leaving a circular opening on top of a diameter of 1.5 metres or less, with the floor at least 2 metres below. The trap was baited by attaching the fresh carcass of a goose or chicken to the inner end of a plank projecting over the wall and balanced from the adjacent fellside or large boulder. The weight of the fox up-ended the plank, tipping the fox into the trap, from where it would, in theory, be unable to climb or leap out of the constricted space. It would then be shot within a day or two and retrieved for the value of its pelt ...

... Unfortunately, the first written account [*of fox traps*] referred to the Great Bourne trap as a "goose bield", and every writer since has used this description. The name has stuck, but it is wrong and misleading. There are goose bields to be found, but they served a different purpose. They were designed to keep geese in and foxes out.

## Eagles and Foxes as Vermin On Lakeland Birdlife

*Bentley Beetham (1936-7)*

Alas, these splendid birds [*eagles*], which are natural inhabitants of our Lakeland crags, have long ago been banished from our land, but their former presence here is plentifully attested by the numerous Eagle Rocks and Eagle Crags which are to be found in the district .... these birds have always concerned and interested man - if only from an economic point of view, and so we find frequent

references to them in Lakeland history. They were classed as vermin, and along with foxes, ravens, polecats and other freebooters a price was put upon their heads. And so it comes about that in archives of some Lakeland parishes, notably in those of Crosthwaite, there are frequent records of the churchwardens having made disbursements to their parishioners for killing Eagles in the days when these splendid birds still graced the neighbourhood. Thus under date 1713, we find amongst others, the following entries in the Crosthwaite Parish Register:

	s.	d.
"To John Jackson for killing an old Eagle ..	1	0
" Widdow Harris' sons for 3 young Ravens ..	1	0
" Edward Berket for a young Eagle ..		6

and so on.

Imagine Golden Eagles at sixpence and a shilling apiece! Foxes were evidently much more feared by the flockmasters, for during the same period their slaughter was rewarded by no less a sum than three shillings and fourpence; big money in those days.

### **Fox-hunters' Merry Neet In John Peel's Country**

*W.T. Palmer (1932)*

After the day's [*hunting*] is over, the fox-hunters foregather in some old village inn, a host of merry lads, young and old. This dark evening we are driven from the hills by driving snow .... Our little inn .... is very welcome. Hounds are fed and bedded down, after which a great bowl of hot-pot, mutton and potatoes, comes on to the board. At the top table, there is a semblance of service, but "below the salt" .... each man "howks" for himself – generously. The next dish is apple dumpling, but it does not go to the end of the crowd. "We can allus dea wi'out what we don't get, missus; I maed a belly-ful at that tatie-pot."

"Let's mak a merry neet on it," is declared; "by gow, but it's wild outside." .... So .... the best supporter of the hunt is voted to the chair, and the tray goes round. "There's a goodly bit of sma' silver coming," hints the chairman; "some of these lads are badly off for wark." He gives a good share to redress the balance. "They're decent chaps, and nut ale-cadgers ..."

... Shepherds, quarrymen, a raffish fellow like a gipsy or potter, farmhands, the postman in uniform, a few visitors, and the huntsman in his "other" pink coat sit around the table, smoking and talking quietly until the real fun begins ... .. After a rattle of mugs and glasses .... comes a local hunting ditty .... The soloist turns his eyes and chin toward the ceiling, and then "gi'es mouth" as the

chairman calls it. But really he is only a bit in the lead of the rest, for practically every man is audibly following on .... "Noo, chorus, lads," he yells, "an' give it weft." If there had been more chorus, the windows would have cracked, for at a certain catch note the whole gang screech, howl, and hallo their hardest like a pack in full cry on the hillside. And the huntsman joins in with his horn.

## CONSERVATION

### Trevelyan's Access Bill, 1908 The Right to Climb and Wander

*Lawrence W. Chubb (1908)*

The Moors of Yorkshire are being absorbed for grouse-shooting .... in Wales .... in the last few months the public right to ascend Snowdon itself, by one of the most interesting and picturesque routes from Capel Curig, has been challenged.

Where the common rights over mountain areas have been preserved, as has fortunately been the case in many parts of the Lake Country, the right to wander has not been contested to any serious extent. Generally speaking, however, it may fairly be argued that the public have a very real grievance in the matter, *for until modern times the right of walking over uncultivated land was never disputed.* Moreover, before the steady tide of rural depopulation set in, the moors and mountains – almost without exception – were common land, traversed in every direction by footpaths and bridleways, used by agricultural labourers and others who desired to reach by the shortest route the scene of their work in neighbouring hamlets, fields or woods. Many of these paths have ceased to be of material use as ways of convenience alone, and hundreds of undoubted public rights of way have consequently been lost by disuse or physical obstruction .... Now that travelling facilities have been improved, and a distinct cult for mountain climbing and country rambling has developed, these tracks have come to be appraised not only in proportion to their local use as highways, but also in proportion to the extent to which they contribute to the health and enjoyment of the community.

The Access to Mountains Bill will do much to remove the disabilities from which the public suffer ...

### Farmers' Rights in the National Park A National Park for the Lake District

*A.B. Hargreaves (1945)*

It is clear that if the problem [*conflicting interests as to the development and use of the Lake District*] is left simply to the goodwill and mutual under-

standing of all the interested parties – and to the local authorities with their limited powers – chaos is likely to be the result ...

... As to the particular case of the farmers, whether they be owner-occupiers or tenants, it is made clear in the pamphlet [*National Parks, their Creation and Administration* published by the Standing Committee on National Parks of the Councils for the Preservation of Rural England and Wales, 1945] that there is no intention to give all and sundry the right of wandering over farm lands, but only to secure the legal right of access to uncultivated land such as hill grazings and uplands, over much of which access is at present only 'by courtesy'. Further the good development of land and additions to buildings for the purposes of agriculture would be encouraged. No Lake District farmer need fear that the setting up of a National Park would affect him adversely. On the contrary the farmers would tend to benefit from the encouragement given to the tourist industry, which would be one of the main results of the Commission's work.

### Friends of the Lake District

*T.R. Burnett (1924)*

There is now a large and growing number of people who realize that as a national playground the Lake District is unique; that by its very nature it is exceptionally liable to injury, and that it is an absolute duty to preserve it. Even the National Parks Committee, who were extremely cautious and reserved, made the definite recommendation that the Lake District should become a National Park ...

... it must be clearly understood that we [*the newly-formed Friends of the Lake District*] do not want to interfere with the legitimate rights and occupations of the inhabitants, nor with the reasonable development of the district. But we do want to be assured that any development will be ordered and in good taste; that it will be controlled in a disinterested manner for the ultimate welfare of the District and its guests, and that no vandalism of any kind will be tolerated. To give concrete examples. Few would object to the recent improvement in the Blea Tarn Road, but who could approve of a funicular railway up Rosset Ghyll or a blatant hotel on Sty Head Pass? Or, again, good luck to the folk who have had the means and grace to erect tasteful homes, built with local materials and in traditional style in the lower valleys; but woe betide the speculator in pink tiles and concrete whose activity has already marred many a hallowed spot ...

... Who, then, are these 'Friends'?

Briefly, they comprise all those who are interested in the Lake District and its preservation and who are willing to prove their *bona fides* by subscribing not less than 2/6 a year. The association was formally inaugurated at a meeting held at

Keswick on the 17<sup>th</sup> June, 1934, and it was introduced to a wide public by [a] ... letter to the Press .... The membership is large and increasing, and it is confidently hoped that the basis of the 'Friends' will soon be so wide that it will be impossible for its voice to go unheard.

## ANTIQUITIES

### **Mind Where You Put Your Feet Exploring Lakeland Mines**

*Geoff Cram (1983)*

Some of the Lakeland fells are not quite as solid as they appear. Large volumes of metal ore have been removed, over several centuries, from the tough country rock in the search for iron, copper, lead, zinc and other metals. There is even a tungsten mine (at Carrock Fell; still in care and maintenance) and the well-known labyrinthine graphite (wadd, plumbago) mine near Scathwaite. The mines are sometimes very noticeable, as on Raise, while elsewhere just the faintest traces remain of the old levels, crushing sites and smelt mills ...

... The size of some of the excavations has to be seen to be believed - levels, crushing sites and smelt mills ... consider Hodge Close Quarry and imagine something 100 times or more as large underground. The techniques used [for re-exploration] borrow from both climbing and caving, with the increasing use of abseiler, prussiks and SRT (single rope technique). A recent visit to Coniston (part of the search for Cobblers Hole) involved abseiling into the Red Dell holes in wet suits carrying a dinghy!

Apart from exploration, the interest lies in history, geology and industrial archaeology. Some of the sites, such as Goldscope, Stonecroft in Newlands, Ellers in Borrowdale, Consiton and Caldbeck, were first worked in the sixteenth century, and original hand-cutting of the hard rock can still be seen. Other sites, such as Greenside on Helvellyn and Force Crag were worked in more recent times and are impressive for the sheer size of the workings, complete with clog-marks, wooden and metal rails, trucks and the occasional engine or wheel pit. The overall impression is that original conditions were often unpleasant, and we can only admire what was achieved.

West, Gibson, Collingwood and other writers were pleased to describe their visits to the mines - in the days when the ladders were still new. Visits in 1983 (with suitable precautions) are more likely to involve the use of the climbing rope.



## **On Walna Scar Tread Softly, For... The Antiquities of the Doe Crags Track**

*W.G. Collingwood (1914)*

... along the Walney Scar path and on the left, just beyond the old rifle-butts, is the Bannisdale Circle, about which there was much speculation until we dug it in 1909. It turned out to be a Bronze Age cemetery: a large, low burial mound, enclosed by a broad, flat ring of cobbles, inside of which flagstones had been set on edge as a fence. Some of these fencing flags were set up again and part of the ring was left bare, when we finished our digging, in order to show the structure, and large stones were planted on the spots where finds were made. There seem to have been two cremated burials, at different times. The first was in an urn near the centre, and about 10 feet S.W. of this was the spot where the body had been burnt. The second and larger urn was on the north, buried deep and walled round with stones, forming a rough cist: the fragments of bone in it appeared to have been a woman's, and among them was a little cup with tiny bones and a baby's tooth. A curious find was a bit of the dress of the woman buried there, charred woollen stuff sticking to a burnt stone. On the urn was part of a cooking pot of which other parts were found at a burnt spot S.E. of the centre, where perhaps the funeral feast was made; and at the centre, higher in level than the first urn, was another burnt spot, with the remains of bones which had not been gathered into the urn, and a clay bead which perhaps came from the woman's necklace when she was cremated. So the story can be put together, of life and death in the Bronze Age – probably in its earlier period, or somewhere from 2000 to 1600 B.C.; and it leaves one dreaming of the lady and her child, the great lady of the place, for whom this honourable grave was made before the days of Helen of Troy.

## **Neolithic Langdale The Great Langdale Stone Axe Factory**

*R.G. Plint (1952)*

It had been known for a long time that axes had been made from stone of Lakeland origin which, it was thought, was carried down as boulders into Lancashire, Cheshire and the Midlands by glaciers during the Ice Ages .... Mr Bunch and his wife in 1947 spent a holiday in Langdale where it was known the rock occurred and during that time examined the various scree slopes to see if there was, by any chance, evidence of .... a factory. Their efforts were finally rewarded by the finding of flakes and axes in the screes descending from the gully on the east side of Pike of Stickle. Further examination in the area showed that the workings were extensive. More flakes and axes were found in the screes

to the west of the main fall and in addition several small sites were found on the fells above. Later still it has been found that the work had gone on over the whole out-crop on the southern face of the Pike and much of the scree below had come from these upper workings. At Easter this year it was noticed that the scree at the southern corner of Harrison Stickle was light coloured and, on examination, proved to be the result of another extensive working. Further visits have shown that there are sites along the whole of the south-eastern side of that peak.

So far only axes have been found and these vary in shape: some are broad with a thin butt and others are slightly thicker in section but have a pointed butt. In length they can be anything between 6/10 inches, depending on the initial size of the piece of rock selected for the work and how much it was necessary to chip away. The axes are thought to have been fashioned by striking the piece of rock chosen against a block of stone which acted as an anvil.

### Quarrymen's Loads, 1819 Lakeland Memories

*Darwin Leighton (1936-7)*

A description of Honister Slate Quarries [*in a guide book published in 1819*] is worth recording. 'On the right, half way down the hill, is the road to Yew Crag Quarry. A walk to this quarry will not only furnish some amusement but some idea of the muscular strength and rash exertion required of those whose business it is to conduct the slate from the quarry to the road. From Honister not many years since it was invariably brought down by men, on hurdles placed on their backs and on ground so precipitous that those not witnessing the act would deem it impossible. Few men are found to possess constitutions capable of sustaining such daily rounds of labour, but those who can endure it generally gain more than such as are less painfully employed. The average weight of the slate brought down each time is 896 pounds, the hurdle weighs 80 pounds. The usual number of journeys daily is nine, or fifty four in a week, hence the weight of slate lowered to the valley each day is 8,064 pounds. A quarry man named Laurence Trimmel made fifteen journeys in one day, Trimmel was rewarded in addition to his price per hurdle, by the present of a bottle of rum. Another workman, Joseph Clark, once conducted forty-six loads, 11,766 pounds in one day, he resides at Stonethwaite in Borrowdale and walks three miles each way to and from his work daily. He has performed these Herculean labours for several years without any striking inconvenience excepting thirst.'

## **Hard Liquor from Honister Moses' Trod**

*R.B. Graham (1923)*

"Old Will [Ritson] used to say," said our fine old friend, the late Mr. Jopson, of Thornythwaite, one day in his farm-yard, "that when he was a lad he could remember an old man they called Moses, who used to come over the Trod with a pony, and he was the first man who brought slates to Wastdalehead. He'd bring slates and he'd bring bottles of whisky and all. He made the whisky in the quarries out of the bog-water he got from the big moss up there above Honister Pass. It's bog-water makes the best whisky. And Will said he used to hide his liquor in one of those great piles of stones in the fields at Wastdalehead. That would be his store. He said he'd seen him himself coming over Gable with his pony, when he was a lad. Ay, and he said old Moses would be caught now and then and taken before the magistrate for making whisky on the sly. And the magistrate would be very severe with him, and fine him and confiscate his worm, and then give it back to him on the quiet, because he made such good whisky.

... Eh, he was a great one for tales, was Old Will, but they generally had a long handle to them." \*

*\*Mr Jopson used to say that he himself remembered an old smuggler, whose name he was not sure of (Taylor? Or Walker?) who used to come over the Stake Pass with his goods in the panniers of a white pack pony.*

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND MEMORIALS**

### **Proud Flag Homage on Great Gable**

*Alan Craig (1988)*

Dear Editor,

Harry Griffin's article in the 1985 *Journal* (No.69 p41) gives an account of the War Memorial on Great Gable and mentions (p47) that the tablet was enshrouded by the Union Jack worn by HMS Barham at the Battle of Jutland.

Members may be interested to know the probable reason why this particular flag came to be used for the unveiling ceremony in 1924.

My father, Alan Craig, one of the founders of the club in 1906, was one of the Vice-Presidents in 1919 when the matter of a memorial was first discussed. His brother, Captain Arthur Craig, RN, was Captain of HMS

Barham at Jutland and I am sure that it would have been from his brother that my father obtained the flag.

I wonder what subsequently happened to that flag?

Yours, etc.

Commander Alan Craig, OBE, RN.

## **Remembrance Sundays on Great Gable My Husband Completely Broke Down**

*Mark Scott (1998)*

... Much has been written in the Journals of the FRCC of how the Club acquired Great Gable and the surrounding area and then donated it to the National Trust as a permanent memorial to those members who died in the Great War.

... The Memorial Tablet on the summit of Great Gable was unveiled on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1924 by the Club President, Dr. Arthur Wakefield, in the presence of about five hundred onlookers. Every Remembrance Sunday since, climbers and hill walkers have dragged themselves out of their pits at an ungodly hour, to flog up to the summit of Gable in rain, sleet, gales and if fortunate even sunshine. On arrival some do not have time to recover breath before a distant voice from the middle of the crowd asks them to observe the two minute silence. A dog may bark, a raven flies overhead, occasionally a bugle may sound. Then it is all over. Groups gather together, plan their descent and maybe bag another hill on the way home. Why after all this time does this still happen?

Some of the 'rememberers' gathered on Gable are there because they have been told that it is an experience not to be missed, the crowds, then the silence. What goes through their minds during the silence is anybody's guess. There will be those who will be there to remember friends or relatives injured or lost, not just in the Great War to whom the summit is dedicated, but the Second World War, The Falklands, The Gulf, Northern Ireland. Wherever the Government sent them, they served.

Some will be there to acknowledge the sacrifice, to say a quiet thank you, "if it was not for you I might not be here now". Others are there to pray that the last war will be 'the war to end all wars'. There may even be veterans who have known war, smelt the cordite, felt the noise, seen the carnage, and held to the hope that: 'It will all be over by Christmas.' In the First World War that was to have been Christmas 1914, but it lasted till November 1918 and as a result the National Trust was bequeathed most of the high ground above Wasdale Head.

## Visiting Cards on Pillar Rock

### Editor's Notes

*R.S.T. Chorley (1921)*

The old coffee tin which was placed on the top of the Pillar Rock in 1881 as a convenient receptacle for the visiting cards of those who climbed the rock in those early days is reported to have fallen into the hands of Mr. John Cook of Cockermouth, the honorary secretary of the Allerdale Touring club. It appears to have been found among the effects of a man who died recently. It remained on the rock for five years, and contains the cards of many famous climbers. Overtures made with a view to obtaining possession of it for the Club have fortunately been successful.

### Jacobus Stylites

#### Patriarch of the Pillar

*W.T. Palmer (1940)*

At Sandwith, near Whitehaven, sixty odd years ago, lived that remarkable character, the Rev. James Jackson, who, after climbing the Pillar Rock in his 80<sup>th</sup> year, dubbed himself 'Patriarch' of that cliff. He was a remarkably fit, old man and he had travelled in many climes and seen much service. He was whimsical, erudite, *[and]* extremely clever ...

... On the last day of May *[1875]* he reached the top, returned unscathed to his Sandwith home, and wrote about it in a very comfortable condition of mind and body. While on top he wrote, without spectacles, a card in Greek, and sent a copy to *[George]* Seatree, saying ; 'As you may think the card worth preserving as a souvenir of a very verdant old gentleman, I have given it a covering of liquid glue, i.e. shellac in solution' ..... The following is a translation of the parchment to be found in the bottle *[which JJ left on top]*: 'Jacobus Stylites with John Hodgson ascended the Pillar Rock on the 1st day of the fifth month in the year of our Lord 1875. Written on the summit without spectacles, and the card rolled up and put in the bottle.' ...

*[Jackson wrote to Seatree]*: 'Unslinging my hammer from my neck, I directed my companion to drive a long iron holdfast into the rock for present and future use. On this we hanked the bight of a rope, Hodgson first descended, then I followed. The rope is now in Sandwith, but it will be long before the holdfast disappears' ...

... In 1876, the Patriarch went out on his birthday, but was baffled by mist. On May 4<sup>th</sup> he tried again; he reached the top, alone. *[He again wrote to Seatree]*: 'I saw no bottle, and had prepared no card had there been one. So I

took a small pocket knife, and with it made four successive scores on the western side of the higher staff; and then, descending to the lower one, performed the same operation on its eastern side.'

The Patriarch humorously suggests that while such whittlings would mean nothing to the untutored dalesman or shepherd, others would read the rune that the four scores were meant to show that the marker was a climber eighty years of age ...

... Two years later, the Patriarch set out to climb the Rock on his birthday. He did not return, and Ritson sent out searchers, one of whom found his body at the Great Doup, about 400 yards from the Pillar Rock. He had evidently fallen down a very steep place. The Patriarch had been carrying a bottle to deposit as a record on the Rock.

### First up and down Broad Stand

*Correspondence (1952)*

Dear Sir,

Before the new Scafell Guide appears, may I beg the space to correct an historical error in the 'old'? There, under 'First Ascents' (page 101) you will find that W.G. Collingwood suggested that Coleridge may have ascended Scafell by Broad Stand; and that is the mistake to be corrected. These are the facts:-

(1) Between 1<sup>st</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> August, 1802, S.T.C. made a 'circumcursion' from Keswick by Newlands ... [etc.] ... to Wasdale Head.; from where he climbed Scafell, descended to Taws in Eskdale, and then continued .... back to Keswick.

(2) His account of this can be read in a long journal-letter he wrote for the Hutchinsons and Wordsworths (Wm. and Dorothy) .... The letter survives in a transcript made by Sara Hutchinson, for whom, it may be surmised, Coleridge mainly wrote; he was in love with her ...

... (4) Coleridge went up towards Burnmoor, and then up Scafell by the side of a 'torrent' which was joined by another in a Y. At his second resting-place he still saw Burnmoor Tarn .... It follows that, though he scrambled, he did not rock-climb.

(5) Having gained the top .... he 'skirted the Precipices' and saw beneath him a ridge of hill, like a hyphen, joining Scafell to 'a most sublime Crag-summit, that seemed to rival Sca'Fell Man in height.' He went that way, and got down by 'dropping' by the hands over a series of 'smooth perpendicular Rock' walls; got 'cragfast' or very nearly so, and finally slid down by a 'chasm' .... or 'Rent,' as between two walls .... The rest enables one to trace him down beside Cam Spout to Samson's Stones and 'a little Village of sheep-folds,' and so on by the peat-road to Tawhouse.

I think it is clear that Coleridge has a title to the first *descent* of Broad Stand, on 5<sup>th</sup> August, 1802. .... Thomas Tyson, with whom he stayed at Wasdale Head on 4<sup>th</sup> August, did not tell him of this way-down .... John Vicars Towers of Tawhouse did not know of it either. In Green;’s *Guidebook* of 1819 these two Estatesmen are the only persons mentioned as having climbed from the Wasdale side of Mickledore to the summit of Scafell .... Should they not share the ‘first ascent’ of Broad Stand?

Jesus College,  
Cambridge

Yours sincerely,  
A.P. Rossiter

### A ‘Very Bold Lead’

[‘Small wires have made all the difference to this once, very bold lead.’ –  
*FRCC Guide Lake District Rock, 2003*]

### Some Early Recollections

*Godfrey A. Solly (1909)*

**The Eagle’s Nest Arête** No attempt was made .... until April 15<sup>th</sup>, 1892, when .... Slingsby, G.P. Baker, W.A. Brigg and I went to the arête ...

... I went first and found it difficult enough to get to the little platform. When there I sat down to recover my breath with my back to the ridge and a leg dangling on each side. The party below made some uncomplimentary remark as to what I looked like up there, and I suggested that I was more like an eagle on its nest. That is, I fear, the very unromantic but truthful origin of the name. Those who have visited the spot know that no bird would ever build a nest on so windswept a ledge. Standing up, I found that the rock rather pushed one out. The others got out of the rope, and Slingsby, climbing up as far as possible, stood on a little step just below, with his hands on the platform. I put one foot on his shoulder and as I climbed up, making room for him, he raised himself and finally stood on the platform, helping me as far as possible. I went on and climbed the second step. Then when I came to the third I did not like it. Retreat was even less inviting, and consultation with the others impracticable. After looking round, something of a hold for each hand and foot was discovered, and I went on, with the knowledge that if even one hand or foot slipped, all would be over. Just above this the difficult part ended. Slingsby thought it better to stay where he was on the platform to show the others where I had gone, so Baker came next, and then Brigg, and finally Slingsby joined us ...

... Talking over the climb afterwards, amongst our party, we felt unwilling to let it become known as a route to be followed upon our responsibility ....

We therefore left our advice on record that no one should climb it unless he had previously reconnoitred it with a rope from above.

### **First Woman up CB On Scawfell**

*Mabel Barker (1925)*

... ours was the fourth ascent [*of the Central Buttress of Scawfell*] and Frankland is thus the only man who has been up it twice. It was this, of course, which made it possible for us to climb it as we did, straight through without loss of time or undue expenditure of energy, and with very great enjoyment.

The rocks were dry, but not in perfect condition according to C.D.F., because of the amount of lichen which has grown on them since his last visit...

... the loop belay being settled .... C.D.F. led up the crack, and passed three loops over the chock stone and under himself .... He then called to me to come up as quickly as I could. I did so, but by this time was too excited to climb decently, and scrambled up in an untidy fashion .... The next few moments of tense excitement and rapid action passed quickly, and I do not know what really happened; except that I got on to and over my partner and off his head as quickly as possible ... Probably, being slimmer than former climbers, I got farther into the crack, and chimneyed it. I faced out, and think there was a small hold far up on the inside wall. Almost at once I felt the top of the Flake with the left hand. "I've got it!" I said, thrilled with the realisation that the thing was virtually done, and there probably was not a happier woman living at that moment! ...

... Another upright piece of Flake follows ("dead easy") and another broader edge, still to the left and leading into a collection of broken rocks easily visible from below. Here C.D.F. took the lead again, and just then we heard voices and came within sight of two men on Keswick Brothers, who asked with some interest what we were on.

"Central Buttress: just got up the Flake," said my partner with careful indifference, and just as his second appeared. There are moments when it is rather good fun to be a woman. Probably no lady in history was ever so sure of creating a mild sensation by the mere fact of being where she was.

### **First Woman down CB From Both Ends of the Rope**

*M.M. Barker and J. Carswell (1936/7)*

'We don't climb down often enough.' .... As a result of discussion round this point the idea was born of descending the Central Buttress of Scawfell. Jack



Carswell suggested it – at first tentatively, for it sounded rather crazy; then hopefully as the details were thought out. .... Therefore I was not too much surprised when on an evening in June, Jack Carswell and Ieuan M.B. Mendus arrived at Friar Row proposing that we try it.

... Jack ..., the originator and leader of the enterprise, naturally came last: but one advantage of climbing down is the increased responsibility at the other end of the rope. The first down has certainly more of a job than the third up: and being in that position I had all the fun of working out the route backwards. ....

... We were making good time, and everything in the garden was lovely. But when we assembled round the Cannon we became aware of an obstacle to our triumphal progress. There was a party coming up!

.... A.T.H. and his party .... appeared and traversed over our recumbent bodies to the belay beyond them .... we traded chocolate for cigarettes...

.... Above the last pitch we all met once more. Jack said it went straight down. I said it didn't, and I wouldn't; and after a glance over he agreed cordially. .... It was amusing that our only hesitations over route were with the top and bottom pitches!

Well, it was a great climb!

(M.M.B.)

On looking back we agreed that in the previous 5 ½ hours we had savoured the essence of climbing to the full, and that C.B. had no rival. .... Ieuan and I were proud to have had the company of Mabel Barker. We had read her account of her ascent with Frankland in 1925 many times before we had the pleasure of meeting her. She was the first woman up the climb and it was appropriate she should also be the first down it.

As we sat in Mrs Edmondson's at midnight that night quaffing tea, Mabel said to us, 'Only one thing remains for you boys.'

'Yes?' we replied.

'To repeat the climb when you are in your 51<sup>st</sup> year.'

Truly a chastening thought.

(J.C.)

## TECHNIQUES AND GEAR

### Leading on Hemp Rope

#### The Rope as Used in Rock Climbing

*C.H. Oliverson (1908)*

*Care of the Rope.* – As the rope plays such an important part in rock-climbing it is worth while to look after it well. Keep it dry by guiding it away from any water or wet moss.



The Flake, Central Buttress (1936)

Photo: Geoffrey Barratt

Do not allow the rope to drag over rocks and scree, this only wears it out unnecessarily, and disconcerts the climbers.

When you have finished the day's work, do not throw your trusty much-tried friend the rope, into the nearest corner, but hang it up – not in a hot place – but where the air can circulate round it.

Do not stretch the rope whilst it is drying; this destroys the twist upon which the rope depends for its strength. Do not have a knot at the end of the rope in order to prevent the strands from coming loose; but bind the ends with thin string, starting about half an inch from the end, and continuing for about an inch or so.

If an identification strand be required have it made of wool or other soft material which can easily break, and so not interfere with the elasticity of the rope. *Summing up.* – Never place a novice as second man.

Never allow more than one person to move at the same time in anything like a difficult position.

Do not allow the rope to hang loosely.

Do not take off the rope until each member of the party is clear away from the climb.

Allow companions to take their time in climbing, as you are there for the enjoyment of all.

Play the rope as though you were trying to tire out a whale with a piece of string. Avail yourself of every method of making a climb reasonably safe, it is good form.

Always take plenty of rope, it is much better to have too much than too little. A rope to each man is often not too much in prospecting new climbs.

## **Rubbers, Nails, Tweed, and No Protection Nostalgia for Nails**

*A. Harry Griffin (1981)*

In these days [1930s] "Carter's Celebrated Climbing Boots" were advertised at £4 12s. 6d., including nailing. We used ordinary army boots, nailed by George Stephens for a few shillings. Years later I bought my first pair of Lawrie's boots but had to go to Burnley to get measured for them. On the harder climbs we wore cheap plimsolls – worn a size too small for a tighter fit. The best were black, costing one and sixpence. We used Beale's "Alpine Club" manilla hemp rope, with its thin red strand down the centre, although this got rather heavy and almost unmanageable when wet .... We had no slings or karabiners, no pegs, nuts or bits of wire. If a pitch was 80 or 100 feet long you ran out a length of rope without protection. The shoulder belay was universal – the Tarbuck knot had not been invented – and abseiling, without a sling, could be rather painful ...



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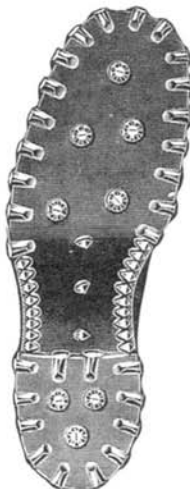
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... There were a few experiments with nails – some, you screwed in – and the waisted clinker, reducing the effective width of the nail, was hailed as a great step forward .... I think we climbed more often on wet rock than climbers do today, nailed boots being more suitable for these conditions .... Anoraks and climbing jackets did not come into general use until after the war. Mostly we used old tweed jackets, corduroy breeches and balaclavas and just got wet through if it rained. Sometimes, if we were trying something really hard, we wore white polo-neck sweaters because these showed up well on photographs. Once, when climbing with Graham Macphee on Gable Crag .... he showed me, with some pride, an anorak he had made out of an old mackintosh, with cunningly contrived cords to adjust its length. This seemed to me a significant development.

### **Newest Fashion in Alpine Boots**

**Editor's Notes (E. Banner Mendus)**

(1946)

Finally – and the shortage of good climbing boots is such that no apology is necessary for including this note – Mrs D. Pilley Richards (now returned to America) has left for sale with Miss M. A. Fitzgibbon, of Rydale Chase, Ambleside, a pair of hand-sewn Swiss climbing boots worn for only two weeks, size 6½, Vibraum soles, tricouni heels.

### **Multi-Purpose Waterproof**

**Sixty-four**

*Anon*

(1950)

And now I must introduce the great success of the tour. I had searched many renowned outfitters and army surplus stock dealers for a lightweight waterproof cape to fit over a rucksack, but without success. Then it occurred to me that cyclists wear sleeveless capes with a bulge out in front to cover the handlebars. Why should not such a one cover a rucksack if worn back to front? Our local bicycle shop supplied a lovely saffron-coloured oilsilk cape with bulge complete, which rolled up to convenient smallness and cost only a few shillings. The top of Sanctsch was in cloud. The wind was chilly and a few drops of rain were falling. Lunch-time was overdue. I undid the cape, wondering how I was to eat without sleeves and found that the stiffness of the oilsilk enabled it to stand up like a tent .... I sat inside .... with a deerstalker cap to fill the neck-hole and keep out the rain. Sheltered from wind and rain I ate in warmth and comfort. The cape was almost transparent and the colour gave a warm impression of sunlight.

## Napes Needle Wearing Out Climbs on Great Gable

*H.S. Gross (1925)*

Needle. – Very Difficult. Obverse route severe. Best number, three. Any footgear, rubbers preferable. Leader requires 40 feet of rope.

This handsome pinnacle is easily the best known climb in the Lake District. The climb is one which is becoming increasingly difficult. The holds are remarkably polished, and from much scraping of foot nails, verily "we've worn the Needle slim." For this reason rubbers are advised in the ascent.

## Triangle of Forces on Napes Needle Climbs, Old and New

*(1910)*

The Needle. July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1910. For those of long reach, a new and preferable method of getting up the top block has been found. Standing at the right-hand side of the shoulder, with a hand at each end of the block, it is possible to raise the left leg over the far corner on the left, and by compressing the arms along the crack lift the body till the sloping foothold just above is reached with the left hand. The striding position on the corner can now be converted to a standing one. (A small foothold for the right has since been used to assist in pulling to the corner.)

## Climbs, Old and New

*(1911)*

A Needle Note. Regarding the note on The Needle in last Journal (page 145), is not the print below an illustration of what is described? If the crack is treated like a horizontal bar, a leg can be thrown over either end or corner, by a short man. On my first ascent I used the right hand, but several years after, probably for want of practice, I couldn't work the gymnastic on that end, and tried the left corner with success. As to the figure in the print, all I wish to say is,

"These be my struggles, but not my pants."

G.B.G.



## Wannabe Rabbits – syllabus Hints to Beginners

*G.F. Woodhouse, M.A. (1910)*

Happy is the beginner who has an experienced man to take him about; but there are many who have to start almost on their own, and to these I would address a few remarks.

Firstly, start climbing in good weather. Take plenty of rope, and see that you can tie all the necessary knots. Consult such a book as Jones', and be content with doing the easy courses first. Afterwards pass on to the moderate ones, keeping to the order as far as possible. Repeat your climbs; if you get bad weather, then repeat some of the *easy* ones. Never toss for the leadership; let the most experienced lead. Whenever you get the chance to climb with an expert, watch him carefully, and see how he tackles each difficulty. Always belay wherever you get the chance. Always be careful of loose stones, even if you are the last man. It is good practice for the time when you may lead, or be promoted higher up the rope, and so become responsible for the man below you.

With an ordinary man who only has one week of climbing in a year, the "easy" and "moderates" will or should take two or three years to work through. He may then begin on the difficult courses, taking them in order as far as possible. He need not be in a hurry to do Moss Ghyll or the Intermediate Gully, as they will still be there when he is fit to lead up them safely. Many of the present-day climbers have neglected the easy routes, and have done the more advanced courses much too early in their novitiate.

If climbers would think over these principles here put down, and act in their spirit, there would be fewer hairsbreadth escapes and regrettable incidents, and they would not fill the minds of those, who know these climbs, with gloomy fears.

## Wannabe Tigers - qualifications Committee Notes

*(1908)*

The following important resolution will ... be submitted to the General meeting in November, 1909.

"THAT THIS CLUB STRONGLY CONDEMNNS ANY MEMBER WHO LEADS OR ATTEMPTS TO LEAD UP ANY OF THE EXCEPTIONALLY SEVERE CLIMBS GIVEN IN THE LIST BELOW, WITHOUT HAVING PREVIOUSLY CLIMBED THE DIFFICULT PART OF SUCH COURSE ON THE ROPE HELD FROM ABOVE, OR BEHIND A FIRST-CLASS CRAGSMAN WHO HAS PREVIOUSLY LED UP SUCH COURSE.

"THAT THIS CLUB STRONGLY CONDEMNS ALL THE MEMBERS OF ANY PARTY NOT ACTING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ABOVE RESOLUTION.

"THAT THIS CLUB STRONGLY URGES UPON ITS MEMBERS, AND UPON ALL PERSONS CLIMBING IN ITS AREA, THE NECESSITY OF NOT ATTEMPTING TO LEAD UP ANY OF THE COURSES GIVEN BELOW UNTIL THEY HAVE LED UP AT LEAST TEN OF THE COURSES CLASSIFIED AS DIFFICULT IN THE BOOK 'BRITISH MOUNTAIN CLIMBS'."

LIST OF EXCEPTIONALLY SEVERE CLIMBS,  
AS MENTIONED ABOVE.

Scawfell Pinnacle (Direct from Lord's Rake), Jones's Route.  
North West Climb – Pillar Rock.  
C. Gully, The Screes.  
Walker's Gully – Pillar Rock.  
Doe Crag – Easter Gully.  
Eagle's Nest Arête, Great Gable.  
North Face, Pillar Rock, by Hand Traverse.  
Kern Knotts Crack.  
Doe Crag, Central Chimney.  
Scawfell Pinnacle, by Deep Ghyll, Jones's Route (or by Gibson's Chimney).  
Haskett Gully – Scoat Fell.  
Warn Ghyll – Buttermere.  
Birkness Chimney – Buttermere.  
Torcador Gully, Green Crag – Buttermere.  
Doe Crag, Intermediate Gully.  
Gimmer Crag, "A" Route.  
Gimmer Crag, "B" Route.  
Screes, Great Gully (direct).  
Scawfell Pinnacle, High Man (direct from Deep Ghyll).  
Doe Crag, North Gully.

## RISKS, RESCUE, AND MEDICAL

### Statistical Risks of Club Membership

... And Now for the Bad News

*John Wilkinson (1981)*

Since the formation of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District on November 11<sup>th</sup> 1906, 39 members of the club have died in the mountains *{4 from heart failure, 35 in accidents}* .... The membership of the club has increased from 86 in 1907 to the present figure of 906, peaking out at



1002 in 1961-2. Thus with an average membership of 700 p.a. and an accident rate resulting in the death of a member roughly every two years, the risk of death in any one year would be 1 in 1400. However, this presumes that all members of the club are active and this is clearly not the case today ...

... With an active membership of 200 [*i.e. spending say 40 days or more a year on the hills*] the risk of death in any year increases from 1 in 1400 to 1 in 400. Since this is comparable to the risks incurred by a 10 cigarette-a-day smoker, perhaps it is time we printed a disclaimer at the bottom of the form of application for club membership: "Fell and Rock warning: climbing can seriously damage your health".

Before you rush off to compose a letter of resignation to the club secretary, I would invite you to compare the risks of being in the F.R.C.C. with those incurred by the members of other climbing clubs, for example ... by 1966, when the ACG ceased publishing a list of deceased members in the *Bulletin*, 16 climbers had lost their lives in accidents ... This was at a time when the club membership was below 50. Even assuming 100 per cent active membership, the risk of death was 1 in 40 p.a., a value ten times as high as the risk run by F.R.C.C. members, and one which many climbers would consider unacceptable.

### **No MRSA in Mountain Streams The Mickledore Accident of 1884**

*W.P. Haskett-Smith* (1912)

... a very eminent surgeon .... has given us an account of the patient's injuries:

"... The fall was broken at a distance of about seventy feet by a rough rock slope... Along the rock slope, the integuments of the head and face were scraped and ground dreadfully.

"The scalp and integuments of the forehead were hanging in tatters over the ears and eyes. The nasal and superior maxillary bones were denuded of covering, indented and bruised. The lips and chin were in rags, the eyelids torn and livid, and all the soft parts covered with a sandy grit embedded into their substance. He was in a state of semi-coma from shock and haemorrhage, with two ribs fractured and a deep laceration on the buttocks; but, fortunately, there was no fracture of the skull. I had no appliances but pure cold water, and no instruments but a common sewing needle and some silk. After carefully picking, scraping, and wiping the parts with a clean rag, dipped in the mountain stream, I stitched the different parts of the skin together with numerous and close sutures, pressed up into shape the indented nasal bones, and bound up the head and

face with a wet bandage. There was no other treatment but cold water and simple diet. The wound healed throughout by primary union, and as I recently learned from the patient himself (an Edinburgh Medical Graduate, who recently called to thank me) with no suppuration whatever, and leaving extremely little disfigurement. Even with the advantages of a good constitution, which the patient possessed, and recent mountain training, I doubt whether the results would have been so perfect in a large town."

*British Medical Journal*, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1885

### **Shock Treatment Six Blasts a Minute**

*J.C. Lyth, M.B., B.S., Lond. (1950)*

I am a very humble person – especially on rock .... However, I do know the Fells and I do know something of first aid and the Borrowdale Mountain Rescue Team, so here goes for what it is worth ...

... How can you tell whether anyone is suffering from shock? His teeth may chatter, he complains of cold and looks and feels cold to the touch; in severe cases he may sweat, his pulse is rapid and feeble, his colour is leaden, and his pupils dilated.

The treatment for shock consists of – not exactly wine, women and song, but wine, warmth and sustenance. Wine (or other alcohol if you have it, the stronger the better), works like magic.

I remember a small boy scout whom I helped to rescue one evening from the Links of Bow Fell above Three Tarns, about 1932.

He had a double fracture of the leg bones and had been out all the night before in wind and rain. I took a large flask of port with me, and gave him half of it before I set his leg. He was soon in good shape, and I gave him the other half before we set to work to get him down the crags and scree. By the time we reached the saddle, where a stretcher awaited us, he was drunk as a lord and happy as a king, and never looked back.

Reassurance also helps. Light a cigarette and give one to the patient ...

### **'Wise Woman' and Other Healers in Wasdale Bygone Days in the Lake District**

*Lawrence Pilkington (1923)*

When I was laid up, after being crushed in Piers Ghyll in 1884, the [*Wasdale Head*] inn was kept by Mrs. Tyson, but old Ritson would come in and look me up; he was especially anxious to fill me up with porridge, being quite

certain my ribs were crushed in and needed forcing out by natural means. Mrs Tyson was more practical, and set out in her gig to fetch me a bed-rest when I was allowed to sit up; unfortunately the gig upset and her wrist was broken, so she called in a "wise woman." A friend of mine who was looking after me found the "wise woman" waving poor Mrs. Tyson's hand over the kitchen fire, into which she was casting salt whilst muttering charms; later the doctor who was attending me had to set the wrist. These "wise women" seem to have died out; the last I heard of was a Mrs. Cannon, who lived at Watendlath; she concocted excellent herb medicines, and was especially celebrated for a sprain ointment. She could also send people to sleep, but did not call herself a suggestion doctor.

## ON AND OFF THE FELLS

### Wind up

#### Goat Water in a Rage

*Wm. Cecil Slingsby (1912)*

If good be the choice of Coniston for the Annual Meeting and Dinner of the Club, better still is the choice of November for the time. This month usually provides us with a gale of wind; we find Goat Water in a rage, and

"... loud winds in storms of vengeance fly,

Howl o'er the main, and thunder in the sky."

The more the merrier, say I ...

... Last year, novelties were provided for us. The wind blew for the most part up the tarn, and by way of variety across it, and Coniston Old Man and Doe Crag played at battledore and shuttlecock with the sheets of water which were dashed against their rugged faces. Some of our party were indeed drenched with the spindrift from the tarn when they stood on the very top of Doe Crag. Two others were nearly blown off the top of the Old Man, and had to crawl along the ridge for very safety's sake.

### Slingsby, Host to Heroes

#### Memories of Cecil Slingsby and Other Mountaineers

*Eleanor Winthrop Young (1933)*

[Mrs Young was a daughter of Wm. Cecil Slingsby]

Father had never been out of Europe, and yet his knowledge of the mountain regions of other parts of the earth was quite colossal ... *[discussing]* pos-

sibly Nanga Parbat or some range in the Caucasus or Andes .... "My dear fellow," Cecil would say to Collie, Bruce or Longstaff, "you can't possibly go that way; there's a very nasty little glacier that comes down there," and so on, and nearly always he was right.

All of which serves to remind me of the many mountaineers who came to our house – great men all, but to us children delightful friends and playboys of our schoolroom or nursery ...

... Professor Norman Collie – a frequent visitor – I remember on a particular Christmas Eve, in the early days of this century. The whole family was gathered around the supper table, ready for the meal, with its cold foods but hot mulled ale ...

... Collie came in very late, towards the end of the meal, and sat down looking most subdued, if not sad. Strange event! "Collie, what's up?" demanded my father, with a flourish of his hospitable hand. "Why so glum?" After a pause a cavernous voice replied, "I had a bit of a fall this evening, trying to get here, down your cellar steps." ...

... And Bruce – then a mere "Major Bruce" – .... danced round our drawing room table, on an off-day once, balancing peacock feathers on his nose and singing a suitable ditty the while. The two well-brought-up daughters of the late Admiral von Tirpitz, who were spending their holidays with us, were rather horrified. "So do Prussian officers *not* behave"; but they were secretly entranced, and I think wished that such things might be possible also in Berlin.

### **Assemblies of Notables at Parkgate Mrs. Harris. A Tribute to Memory**

*W.T. Palmer* (1929)

In pre-war days there wasn't a rock-climber in England and Wales, and mighty few in Scotland, who didn't know the name and fame of this ideal hostess of the fells. Mrs. Harris [*of Parkgate, Coniston*] was known for a broad smile of sympathy, and for her joy in dispensing hospitality. Why, I've had tea at Parkgate with Presidents of the Fell and Rock, Rucksack and Yorkshire Ramblers' Clubs at the same time, and have introduced two separate native Presidents of the Scottish Mountaineering Club. As Scots know the exact virtue of high tea with complicated dishes, that was rather running a risk, but I knew my hostess! More than two Presidents of the Climbers' Club, and one even of the great Alpine Club, have been known to loiter awhile to chat with Mrs. Harris. Climbers' Cottage, England, was said to be sufficient address for Parkgate in those days ...

... To some of us, in later years, Mrs. Harris stood perhaps as a sort of elder sister, but a deal more genial. She knew something from our direct confession of our mountain failures, but could be relied upon to keep her counsel at the awkward moment. By the merry twinkle in her eye, her friends knew that she could instantly upset the narrator of some adventure yarn by a tale about some one who lost himself upon the moor just above the house, and took an hour to find the gate into the lane. And it wasn't dark really, only a bit misty.

### **Old Thorneythwaite Thorneythwaite**

*W.G. Pape* (1947)

Thorneythwaite Farm had housed the climber even before the foundation of the F. & R.C.C.; Darwin Leighton, Braithwait, Andrews, Thompson and others of the 'ancients' stayed there in pre-club days ... Thorneythwaite was known as 'The F.&R.C.C. Club Quarters' in 1908, when the first recorded meet was held there in August, and the tariff was five shillings per day ...

... Old Mr Jopson was a strict Sabbatarian and flatly refused to have his photograph taken on a Sunday, and turned his broad and uncompromising back on the camera ...

... The charm of the place has to be seen and experienced to be really understood; in all the moods and conditions of weather, winter and summer alike, it has an atmosphere all its very own.

The old farmhouse and its out-buildings are uniquely situated in such a delightful setting among those giant trees and near the head of the loveliest dale in all Lakeland ... And what can one say of that most superb bathing pool just across the field? Can one ever forget those before-breakfast dips, or that exquisite 'peace-with-all-the-world' feeling after the evening bathe; epilogue to a hot and exhausting day on the crags?

Did I say 'Memory hold the door'? .... The campers, the caravanners, the sleepers-out, the members from Seathwaite, Seatoller, Rosthwaite and, of course, the inmates of the farm all crowd into the sitting room, or squat on the stones outside, for those never-to-be-forgotten sing-songs; this memory is certainly peculiar to Thorneythwaite, and is, perhaps, the most popular.

And that sitting-room with its 1822 fireplace, its wood fire and low ceiling, its suffocating tobacco smoke and the oil lamp on the table. What memories!

## **Idyll in Borrowdale A Camping Holiday**

*Millican Dalton (1913)*

One of my favourite camps is a steep fellside in Borrowdale, commanding a perfect view of a perfect lake, Derwentwater, framed by mountains on each side, with the purple bulk of Skiddaw in the distance; and I have watched many gorgeous sunsets from that spot, as we cooked over our wood fire and dined in the open. On one such occasion we reclined in our red blankets, gazing on the ever-changing tints of the sky, yellow, orange, crimson, pink, and grey, merging into the blue, purple, and violet of the hills – all these colours duplicated in the lake beneath.

At midnight there was still a lingering afterglow when the full moon rose above the Fells of Borrowdale, behind the three little white tents. A girl in the party proposed a row, so four of us commandeered a boat, and rowed the two miles down the winding Derwent, and on to the open lake. Broken silver-edged clouds drifted across the moon, and as we pulled lazily along, misty, wispy vapours rose from the surface of the water, veiling and unveiling the surrounding wall of mountains.

Landing on one of the wooded islands, we made a big, blazing fire of sticks, boiled water in an oatcake tin, put in some slabs of chocolate which one man happened to have in his pocket, dug out some old Swiss-milk tins for drinking vessels, and with some oatcake, had a light impromptu "Supper of the Savage Club," and talked of past adventures.

Re-embarking, the star-spangled sky was perfectly clear, with faint indications of the approaching dawn. It was four o'clock when we got back to camp, quite ready for the sleep deferred.

## **Off-roading in Gillerthwaite Eleven Days in Wind Gap**

*W.G. Hennessy (1929)*

On Wednesday the party went round to Gillerthwaite by car, accompanied by the local bad weather system. From Ennerdale Bridge to Gillerthwaite by car is an experience to be remembered. On the first occasion a route was followed past the Angler's Inn and by opening eight gates, crossing four water splashes (including the ascent of a waterfall with a gradient of, apparently, one in one), and the successful negotiation of a bridge built of loosely-piled sleepers, Gillerthwaite was reached. The car was too small to fit into the ruts made by the farm carts and in any case was too low built for the wheels to hold in the

ruts and the back axle to clear the mounds. The result was that two wheels kept to a rut and two bounced delicately along a mound, giving a pronounced list to the car which, burdened by the huge body of the mate and lashings of stores, careened excitingly until the farm was reached. The weather was still disgusting ...

### **Doss House (Or Worse) in Leek Once Upon A Time**

*Fergus Graham (1951)*

When I was actively climbing, in the 1920s, the year 1900 seemed so remote in climbing history as to be practically out of sight. Now those 1920s. are as far as from the present year ...

... After a good day at the Roaches and neighbourhood I decided to walk into Leek, spend the night there, and catch the first train [*back to London*] in the morning. Arriving in Leek at dusk, I accosted a policeman on the matter of a bed for the night. After a searching look at me he directed me to the most suitable place he could; and presently I found myself at a very grim Oliver Twist sort of establishment, where I was met by a gent in shirt-sleeves. On my request for a bed he took me upstairs to a large and grimy dormitory, where, on the bed next to mine, there lay a dirty and malevolent-looking celluloid dickey and collar. This was too much for my morale and I asked in desperation if I could not have a room to myself. After stalling for some time the man eventually showed me into a cell-like room, filthy of course, but with only one bed and no collars. Fortunately I was tired enough to ignore the condition of the sheets. Early next morning I was woken by banging on the door and a hoarse voice shouting, 'Come on, there. Get out of it!' I got out like lightning, gulped a poor breakfast, and wasted no time in escaping from that ill-omened place. It was not till later that I remembered that I had my climbing clothes on when I asked the policeman.

### **Consolations of Poetry on the Lakes 3000's Walk Browning in Borrowdale**

*Elsbeth A. Ackerley (1961)*

There is little obvious connection between Castle Crag and the Koppelberg Hill outside Hamelin, yet in my mind they will always be connected, especially in the small hours of the morning. It is strange how long it takes, walking up the Borrowdale road, to pass Castle Crag; it seems to move forward with you, always just ahead, half-right. The illusion is, of course, fos-

tered if you have been walking for over 20 hours, and are only too aware of the miles still lying between you and Rosthwaite ...

... Sunset unfortunately beat us [*on Skiddaw*]; we reached the summit too late to get its full glory .... Then we ran down the first couple of hundred feet to get out of the piercing wind.

Now there were only seven miles of hard road between us and the Salvaging House .... [*at Ashness*] sleep, our worst enemy now, nearly defeated us, and to keep ourselves awake I started reciting all the poetry I knew. It is odd how one remembers scraps of Kipling, side by side with Milton on his blindness and *Henry V*; and, of course, my *pièce de resistance*, *The Pied Piper*. Having run out of other material I went through this twice, and as it takes all of 20 minutes, this saw us another two miles on our way. Before I climb the four three thousanders again I'm going to learn *Paradise Lost*.

### **Broke at the End of a Walking Tour – Ask a Friend A Lakeland Walking Tour**

*J.R. Stamper (1912)*

... [*from Boot*] we decided to bring our tour to a close by returning to Windermere. By sleeping rather too long we missed seeing the famous railway in operation, for the morning train left before we were up, and we should have been compelled to stay too long to see the next.

Before we left Boot, we narrowly escaped being placed in a rather awkward situation .... in the bustle of starting [*our tour*], we had omitted to total up our probable expenses. When our bill for the night's accommodation was presented by mine host of the Freemasons' Arms, we found we could just pay it, and there remained one single sixpence as the total finances of the expedition

... We made short work of our descent into Little Langdale; and here the weight of our combined wealth became rather irksome, so we decided to get rid of it in exchange for two glasses of milk at one of the farms. Had we gone with a can and asked for a pint of milk, we should have been charged probably threehalfpence or twopence. But by asking for a glass the price is immediately trebled or quadrupled ...

... on coming out onto the road again [*from Colwith Force*] I found a current coin of the realm of the value of one halfpenny. I kept this for some time as a memento, but ultimately I mislaid it ...

... at Skelwith Bridge... the hard road caused our hob nails to make their presence felt .... Consequently, when we got to Ambleside, we were both feeling rather footsore, and the steamer proved too strong a temptation for us.



We hurried to the house of a mutual friend, who had no hesitation in becoming our banker *pro tem.*, and we obtained the wherewithal to pay our fares to Bowness .... In less than an hour .... we were at home, and over an excellent meal were telling of the glorious time we had had.

## THINGS THAT DO HAPPEN

### 'Climbing' Helvellyn and Fairfield Lakeland Memories

*Sir Alfred Hopkinson, K.C., M.P. (1925)*

The first mountain I ascended in the Lake Country was Fairfield, in June 1857. The last was High Street, at the end of August, 1925. Between those dates must have come sixty or seventy visits, and recollection of the earliest is the clearest. Professors of child psychology have asserted that interest in nature and care for natural beauty does not develop until about the age of fourteen. Wordsworth knew better, and names six as the age when the highest faculties are most active. In those early days people spoke of "climbing" Helvellyn or Fairfield, even in summer. The phrase would hardly be used now, but conditions in winter may still be found that make these ascents a task for experts; an overhanging cornice on the east of Helvellyn may test their power to the utmost. I have seen the top cased in black ice, swept by a blizzard in which no one could stand upright, and one of the finest climbers of the last century meeting with a serious accident on the hard frozen slopes on the Wythburn side. He tried to stand up in the gale, but was blown down the slope on which one could almost wheel a perambulator in summer, unable to stop until reaching the stones at the bottom.

### Bow ... Row ... Sow ... DOW? Dow Crag or Doe Crag?

*W.P. Haskett-Smith (1930)*

One man writes to me that he has put the question to every quarryman for miles around, and has found them unanimous in favour of "Dow"; while another, who has lived within a few miles of the rock for many years and knows every inch of it, assures me that he has never heard any pronunciation but "Doe."  
...

... Many of those who contend for "Dow" are unconsciously influenced by the belief that we have here the Welsh "Du" or Gaelic "Dhu", but in this case the name would be far more common than it is, and we should find in every

dale not only a "Dow," but in contrast with the "black" one of the words for "red," Coch or Dearg ...

... When the Ordnance surveyors were at work some 90 years ago the local evidence then collected left them in no doubt that the two summits west of Goats Water were Buck Crag and Doe Crag, and the implied contrast makes the pronunciation certain.

It must be borne in mind that in the Lake Country -ow, though often written, is not really a favourite sound and, when not carrying the accent, has a strong tendency to pass into -o, -ah, or -a. Thus Skiddaw was once Skit How, and in pronunciation dropped to Skidda. Of course, a monosyllable carries the accent, and so "Dow" is protected against this change; but, when a native uses the common adjective "how" (hollow), if you listen carefully you will sometimes find that he pronounces it to rhyme rather with "no" than with "now." To sum up: all we can say is that, though we must be prepared to revise our conclusion if earlier evidence turns up, the earliest we have at present is decidedly in favour of Doe.

### **O.G. Jones gets the needle on the Needle Reminiscences**

*J. Norman Collie, F.R.S. (1926)*

I often went to the Lake District climbing with Collier, Robinson, Slingsby, and others. In those days we were content with what I suppose are now looked upon as very ordinary climbs. It was before Jones and his successors conquered more and more difficult problems, and called them "courses." Which reminds me of one September when I got tired of Whitby, and with a friend made straight for Wastdale with rucksacks.

We had just climbed the Nape's Needle and come down again. Two men who had been watching us then started up it. They got to the ledge underneath the top, but could get no further, so I climbed up to help them. One of them got into the crack but could not find sufficient hand hold around the corner, and wanted to know if there was no other way. Finally he got on my shoulders, and I pushed him up till he got a hand hold on the top; he then scrambled up.

I went down again and began climbing the ridge behind the Needle, but I had to come down again, and once more climb up the Needle for the last man could not get off the top; I got him off safely, and the man was Jones. It was, I believe, his introduction to climbing at Wastdale.

## Robinson Cairn

### The Memorial to the Late J.W. Robinson

(1908)

*[Despite objections that it would establish an undesirable precedent]*  
 ... it was decided to fix an inscribed bronze tablet to a face of rock on the knoll at the end of the High Level track overlooking the Pillar Rock, Ennerdale .... The case .... is surely an exceptional one. John W. Robinson was locally much more than a rock-climber. He was a celebrity of the district, one of the dalesfolk to the manner born. His whole career was permeated and moulded by his love for the fells and dales of his native county and for their inhabitants, by whom he was esteemed as greatly as by his climbing friends.

Near the Memorial Tablet a cairn was erected on Easter Saturday, when a goodly number of the deceased climber's old friends, members of the Alpine, Climbers', Yorkshire Ramblers, Fell and Rock Climbing, and other mountaineering clubs gathered at the site for the purpose. The Chairman of the Memorial Committee, Mr. W.P. Haskett-Smith, one of the earliest of the deceased's pioneer rock-climbing friends, directed the proceedings, and the structure though hurriedly raised, will be effective in denoting the whereabouts of the Memorial Tablet, and will serve as a distinctive and perhaps useful local landmark.

## Burn the Books?

### The Library

*The Hon. Librarian [Mary Rose Fitzgibbon] (1935)*

During 1935 a new home had to be found for the Library, as for various reasons the new Librarian was unable to accommodate so many books at her house. The Club in consequence was faced with the necessity of renting some suitable room to house the Library. Various opinions were expressed; there was the member – perhaps revolutionarily inclined – who said 'Burn the books ....' and those who thought that '... our only duty to the Library is the mere warehousing of the books,' and those who agreed with the proposal of renting a Club Room for the use of the members, large enough to house the Library, as well as all the 800 reserve Journals for which the Librarian is responsible. This scheme did not receive enough support, because the only room available would have involved the Club in an expenditure of £25 a year. However, a home had to be found for the books, and with the aid of seven generous members who promised to contribute (plus a donation of 30/- from a guest at the annual dinner), the Library was housed in a room at the Conservative Club, Ambleside. (Annual rent of £8, including lighting and heating). The Fell and Rock was unable to acquire the sole use of the room, but members may borrow books at any time,

by applying to the caretaker for the keys to the bookcases and entering particulars of all books, etc., taken away from the Library, in the Library Book .... The Librarian will, of course, continue to send books to any member who may apply to her.

### **No Hons for Officers Thoughts on a Piece of Glass**

*F.H.F. Simpson (1946)*

One day in September nine years ago the present Librarian came to me as I sat on the gravel outside the New Dungeon Ghyll Hotel.

'How would you like to take over the Club Slides, and leave me to stick to the books?' she said ...

... At a subsequent Langdale Committee we sat in an upstairs room discussing a thousand things which beset the Committee always, and someone pointed out that there was a new officer with no title. After some thought the name 'Custodian' came up. Everybody looked at me, and I looked at Chorley, who was in the Chair. Chorley smiled at me approvingly.

'All right,' he said, 'Simpson, Honorary Custodian of Lantern Slides.'

'Not Honorary,' corrected the Secretary. 'Just plain Custodian.'

The President concurred, and down I went in the Minute Book, just plain Custodian. Earlier in the evening the Committee had determined to abandon the use of the pompous little word 'Honorary' as no one supposed that the Club's officials drew a fat salary. That was the official beginning.

### **Travel to the Mountains, circa 1800 The Hon. Mrs Murray of Kensington in Lakeland**

*Mary Rose Fitzgibbon (1947)*

When we wish to visit the Highlands or the Lakes, we throw a sleeping bag and a picnic basket into a car, make sure we have a jack and a spare wheel, and set off. Although more complicated, Mrs Murray's preparations were much the same:

Provide yourself with a strong roomy carriage, and have the springs well corded; have also a stop-pole and strong chain to the chaise. Take with you lynch pins, and four shackles, which hold up the braces of the body of the carriage; a turn-screw, fit for fastening the nuts belonging to the shackles; a hammer, and some straps.

For the inside of the carriage, get a light flat box, the corners must be taken off, next the doors, for the more conveniently getting in and out. This box

should hang on the front of the chaise, instead of the pocket, and be as large as the whole front, and as deep as the size of the carriage will admit; the side next the travellers should fall down by hinges, at the height of their knees, to form a table on their laps; the part of the box below the hinges should be divided into holes for wine bottles, to stand upright in. The part above the bottles, to hold tea, sugar, bread and meat; a tumbler glass, knife and fork, and salt cellar, with two or three napkins. I would also advise to be taken bed-linen, and half-a-dozen towels at least, a blanket, thin quilt and two pillows .... With my maid by my side, and my man on the seat behind the carriage, I set off, May the 28<sup>th</sup>, 1796.

### **Transport for the Three Peaks Challenge in 1929 50 Years On**

*Donald Murray (1981)*

The first problem was to find a driver with a car fast enough to make the attempt [*Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike, and Snowdon in 24 hours*] a possibility ...

... We were fortunate in persuading a friend, Bryan Upton, a very fast and experienced driver and the owner of a 1924 30-98 Vauxhall open four-seater tourer. The car was capable of well over 100 mph (a rare car in those days). The handbrake was about 3ft long and on the outside of the body – this was not a holding and parking brake as we have today, but was by far the most powerful brake on the car and was in frequent use. The driver had to reach out with his arm over the side of the car to apply the brake.

There was a canvas hood which we only had up when the rain was very heavy as it reduced the speed, and of course there were no side screens. The petrol tank was at the rear – I forget how much petrol it held; probably about 20 gallons. The petrol feed to the engine was by an Autovac, a device common in those days which used the suction in the inlet manifold to get the petrol from the tank to the engine. Autovacs were never very satisfactory, especially when a lot of petrol was required when driving fast. To overcome this problem a secondary method was fitted. The petrol tank was pressurised by means of an air hand pump fitted to the dashboard and this cut out the Autovac altogether. As far as I can remember, we did about 13/14 mpg on the Autovac and about 9mpg on the hand pump. I don't remember a windscreen wiper but if there was one it would have been worked by hand. The early ones worked off the manifold suction like the Autovac. My recollection is of the driver sticking his head round the side of the screen.

## Travel to the Mountains During the 3-day Week Scene from London

*John Whitehouse (1973-4)*

From London, Lakeland is a vision at the far end of 300 miles of haze-hung road, negotiated with mixed feelings. For those of us who drive up fairly often it is not always easy to justify adding to the pollution. We are thankful for the motorway that stretches over two-thirds of the journey, reducing it to a long evening's drive but at the same time we think of the extra thousands it and its feeders carry to the same goal. ... Despite the shortening of travel-time, however, and the ease with which we square our consciences (not using the motorway wouldn't make it go away) two serious deterrents still stand between the Lakes and us in London – the strain and the cost of a journey which lasts not less than six hours, and perhaps as long as eight hours, according to whether the venue is Beetham or Brackenclose. Once, at Raw Head, a northern member, whose car is no slouch, supposed that Langdale to London would take about four hours. Let us not quibble about a timing which puts even the average speed above the legal limit. The practical point is that it can be done, but usually isn't, and we don't recommend it. Most people and their cars need more time. More time means a longer journey, means more refreshment stops means, more time. The ever-rising cost of petrol bears on us in the south incommensurably. It is surprising, in the face of all this, how many still leave London regularly on Friday evening for a week-end in the hills .... It seems .... likely however that the millions of Merseyside, Selnecc and the West Riding will be pushed by the pressures of inflation, and poor foreign value for the pound, into local holidays in Lakeland while we in out-of-the-way London feel more than ever estranged from it.

Wartime Weather, Transport, Tribulations

## The Year with the Club

*Mary Leighton (1943)*

Borrowdale had its share of trouble in August: an acroplane crash, a climbing accident and devastating floods all in one weekend .... Raging torrents sweeping down the mountain-sides and across the valley .... Mrs Edmondson rescued her floating rations to feed the helpers bringing in an injured climber from Gable ...

... On August 28<sup>th</sup>, the Committee met in Ambleside, which proved to be a very good centre owing to transport limitations. A meal at Dodd's Café before the meeting put the company in good fettle for discussing affairs of state (or the state of affairs) .... Bentley Beetham (now looking more like his

old self again), came by auto-cycle from Barnard Castle, in spite of a gammy wrist, a legacy of his accident at Whit. Nancy Forsyth cycled from Carlisle, and Kenyon from Carnforth. Various other people arrived by various other complicated means, and the result was a most enjoyable, though brief, meeting. [*Where did they stay, in wartime? Brackenclouse was the club's only hut in those days.*] On the Sunday, a party met on Claife Heights in the rain and had lunch with clothes steaming round a huge fire of larch; the same clothes were later wrung out at Randa Pike, where Mrs Chorley gave us tea.

## **Wartime Secret Snowfall The Year with the Club**

*F.H.F. Simpson (1941)*

*Coniston, February 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>*

Ignored by a tongue-tied press [*censored to avoid giving comfort to the enemy*], blessed by the faithful and vilified by the unenlightened was the greatest snowstorm that many of us remember. Its widespread dislocation of the services which we take for granted made the heads of the elders to wag. 'It was worse in 1881,' and 'in '08 we failed to find the first pitch at all . . . absolutely buried!' It fell upon the country from the east on the night of January 27<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>, and swift upon its first impact came the suburban skier, an oddity among the street lamps. As the days passed the expert acquired additional polish; the beginner forsook one uncertainty for another, sliding a little further, falling with forethought.

Then came the meet, and the club lost its identity in the general addiction to winter sport. Our lusty nephew, the Lake District Ski Club, grew to man's estate overnight and celebrated Sunday with the first Slalom race in Langdale.

## **Out of This World**

### **The Modern Icarus! (A hang Glider's Guide to the Lake District)**

*Ed Cleasby (1986)*

... by chance, one warm summer's afternoon in 1978 .... From a belay, high on Falcon Crag, I watched as two 4<sup>th</sup> generation gliders, the latest 'hotships', soared by the cliffs above Borrowdale. No longer was it a flapping deltoid-shaped kite, but a sleek, taut aircraft that displayed a mastery of its environment. Within days I'd enrolled myself on a course .... eventually, around Easter the next year ... I enjoyed four glorious days, emerging the proud owner of an Elementary Pilot's Certificate, with a whole twelve minutes airtime ...

... by November, money set aside for other purposes had been diverted into purchasing a flying machine .... Alas, she was destined to gather more dust than airtime as three more summers quickly passed and I couldn't bring myself to break the bond with climbing.

... Early in July 1982 .... I was introduced to a young Finnish pilot. Gliderless, he was looking for one to borrow .... Certainly he could use it, but I sensed his initial joy turn to disappointment as the sails were unfurled to expose years of accumulated dust, smothering a piece of what was now hang-gliding history. Still, it was basically sound, and for the next couple of weeks I followed him around, becoming more captivated by it all, until eventually, noticing my keenness, he clipped me in .... And from then on I was hooked.

This was now the age of the 5<sup>th</sup> generation glider, a fast, double-skinned, fully battened aerofoil that was a quantum leap in performance on anything that had gone before. Lengthy cross-country flights were becoming quite common, with the hundred mile barrier broken ...

... last year, after several seasons of dedication, the hard-earned skills began to pay off when I managed, not once but twice, to achieve a dream, the classic Lakeland trip; a north-south traverse. Along its length it takes in some of the area's highest and finest peaks, including Skiddaw and Helvellyn.

## HAVE YOU HEARD THE ONE ABOUT ... ?

### Guide Book Style – Old Style Doe Crag and Climbs Around Coniston

*George S. Bower (1922)*

#### **Intermediate Gully** – Severe; strenuous; 80 foot rope.

There are members of the Club to whom "Intermediate" is more than a climb; rather is its ascent one of the solemn rites connected with the practice of a cult. To one such disciple did I write, asking for a description of the preparations necessary on the part of those who would attain to this *cercle*. The reply came by wire: "Train on Raw Meat and Stout, use Bulldog buttons . . ." In the framing of these notes, it has been assumed that the would-be climber is suitably prepared ...

... For the third pitch (15 feet) the leader should face inwards until the chockstone can be embraced, after which he faces right, and uses back, and knees, and tongue. In wet weather there is an ominous cessation of the noise of running waters during these operations ...



## Are You Being Funny? The Use of the Tongue in Mountaineering

T. Aucarr (1919)

... A friend of mine who has visited the Chinese Pyrenees tells me that the native guides in that district are women and that ropes are unknown but that when occasion requires a guide will uncoil her tongue. I am not taken in by these travellers' tales.

Invaluable but rather unusual is the hold that the tongue provides. I was once in a chimney so tight that I could not use arms or legs and my only possible method of progress was the use of my tongue on the walls. I confess that I found the chockstone rather awkward to deal with. I have never used a tongue as a foothold though I have a friend who has stood on a box of sardines ...

## Summitting! Lingmell

J.H. Doughty (1923)

... Having already kicked and hewn some hundreds of steps [*sup Cust's Gully*] in the snow .... someone remarked, in a casual, offhand way: "Let's go to Lingmell." ...

... Was it not Kelly, on one memorable occasion, after completing the Girdle Traverse [*of Scafell*] who electrified a party by replying to the question: "What shall we do next?" by "Let's do Scafell, I've never ticked it off"? Whereupon his stupefied companions solemnly followed him to the summit cairn.

In some such spirit of inert acquiescence [*after ascending Cust's Gully in snow*] we turned our faces to Lingmell .... There are no more delightful spots in Lakeland than these all too unfrequented hanging valleys - Gillercombe, the tract between Gable and Haystacks, and their like. One may pause to rest on polished slabs, fashioned countless centuries ago by the glacier that scooped out the basin; and then go on to jump the puny stream, its present day successor. On we wandered through this pleasant land, a Lethe and Elysium in one, gradually becoming less conscious of any purpose or direction, crags and mountain summits seeming alike irrelevant; until the guiding spirit which had taken our destiny in hand once more bestirred itself; and lo, a gentle slope upon our right beckoned with inviting gesture. It was all done, as it were, in the twinkling of an eye - a mere ten minutes, if exactness be desired - and we were there. Upon its topmost point we stood; the peak of our faithful, if tardy

allegiance; the centre of the geographer's interest; the Cinderella of Wasdale;  
the Mountain that Thomas left out!

We had climbed Lingmell.

### **Shall We Dispense With Styles and Titles? New Climbs in the Wasdale District**

*C.F. Holland (1919)*

The summer of this year gave me the long sought for opportunity under especially favourable conditions of weather, leisure, and suitable companions, without whom indeed most of the new climbs would not have been done. The two companions to whose skilful leading most of these climbs are due were Messrs. H.M. Kelly and C.G. Crawford. (Until the latter ceases to address me as a reverend gentleman I shall omit his title of "Captain") ...

... I cannot refrain from saying something about route 2 [on Pillar]... the rope most unkindly removed my pipe from my mouth and not long afterwards completed my discomfiture by dislodging a stone which hit me on the head. Our exit also was in keeping with the rest of the climb, which as a whole was one of the severest and most unpleasant I have ever experienced.

### **ON AND NEARLY OFF THE ROCKS**

#### **Initiation My First Rock Climb**

*E.H.G. (1907)*

He mopped his brow ... and pointing to a gigantic spike of rock, said laconically, "We'll do the Needle for a start."

I looked at it critically. "Climb THAT!" I said to myself, "I think not; this is really not quite the right sort of sport for a staid (and I hope respectable) medical practitioner." ...

... The rope was tied on and the ascent commenced. I watched him, fascinated. Holding where apparently there was no hold, standing where there appeared to be no foothold, he forced his way upwards. How the directors of his assurance company would have shuddered if they could have seen him! Then my turn came. "Ah," I thought, "if only I get through this in safety, I will lead a better life in future." The crack went fairly easily, but, of course, I got my knee wedged in the usual spot and had it not been for the herculean efforts of the leader, I fear it would still remain there to make the way easier for future novices. How I finished the last pitch I really don't know, but at length, bruised and battered, breathless and

exhausted, I lay stomach downwards on the top, alongside the man who had saved my life at least a dozen times. (Ah, Rob, when the hand can find no resting place, when even a toe-scraps is lacking, when the sides of the Chimney are damp and slimy, may you ever be safely anchored above me and the good Alpine rope, taut as a harpstring, between us!)

That evening at the hotel I enjoyed my dinner like a man who has thoroughly earned it, and surrounded by a genial band of climbers, I felt quite at home, for I hope I have not omitted to tell you that I am resident in an asylum.

### **Artificial Leg on Gimmer A Buttress**

#### **Cecil Slingsby's Impressions of Climbing with Winthrop Young in 1919**

*Muriel Files (1990)*

*[Slingsby's manuscript letter is transcribed with the original arrangement of lines, layout of page, punctuation, omissions and literal errors]*

Eleanor & Geoffrey Young were with us for a week & Geoffrey, G.M. Trevelyan & I were led up a most formidable climb to wit the so-termed "A Buttress on Gimmer Crag" by a young Barrow Vickers engineer named Bower. Rarely, if ever, have I been on so straight-up a rock face & with only finger-tip holds – very good & firm of course owing to the almost perpendicularity of the rock. As you know perhaps Geoffrey Young lost his left leg – amputated very high up too – in Italy. He has invented a wonderful artificial limb for climbing, but I never saw such a magnificent mountaineering feat in my life as his on Gimmer Crag. Bower was at the top with 100 ft. rope, G.W.Y. ~~at the other end~~ half way on the rope I at the other end. Tied on to me also was a 60ft & G.M. Trevelyan at the bottom G.W.Y. had to do practically the whole of his climbing with his hands & one foot, the right. Where nature had provided a little foot-hold for the left foot G.W.Y.

held tight with his hands – often only very minute holds & hopped across with his right foot to the foot-hold designed for the left. This feat had to be done frequently. I carried his two sticks. He never grumbled, but really enjoyed himself. Still it was terribly tiring for him as was also the descent by the footpath to this most cosy hotel. Bower used rubbers as most young climbers do now. Excellent they are on dry rock.

### **Shouldn't Have Done It! Some Rambling Recollections of Wastdale Head**

*A.L. Mumm (1924)*

It must have been in this year [1882], an exceptionally snowy one, that I came down Deep Ghyll with Dr. J.E. King, the late Head Master of Clifton .... Long afterwards, when I became acquainted with the *Alpine Journal*, I discovered, much to my surprise, that it had got into print, and I remember being mildly nettled when I read that "two climbing men, both strangers, walked down the snow the whole way without knowing that they had even done anything remarkable." I did, in fact, know exactly what I was doing, and had learned enough about Wastdale to be well aware that to find Deep Ghyll choked up with snow must be a very rare occurrence. Apart from that there really was nothing remarkable. I had spent five or six summer holidays in the Alps, and had been up about a dozen snow-peaks and over several glacier passes, so that I was not without experience of what liberties can be safely taken with snow when it is in really good condition, and I sounded conscientiously at almost every step. I do not think I should have ventured on the descent if I had not had an ice-axe with me.

### **Not Quite Peeling Off Escape**

*A.P. Rossiter (1942)*

High to my right, a flake: room for my fingers, in a back-hand side-hold. Reached, firm and reassuring. Move up leaning back on it, then left foot up. Accomplished. What's the opposite of a 'lay-back'? Lay-out? Thrust against flake now (but what for left hand?), thrust now, raise right foot; thrust, back-pressing steadily now, now, now; and left hand will reach thin edge of arête. A hold like an

car, wind-hollowed by hallooing wind. A proper Thank-God hold, could swing on it. Swing low, sweet chariot. Now! No. Can do this once, twice, more; no more, no.

I made my last move, and got the ear. Too quickly. It was the right sow, but the wrong lug. I suppose I stopped back-pressing for the fraction while my left dropped over the ear. It let my body come away a bit. The lug of my weight came shearingly on the thin windworn edge, and not straight down. The whole arête pulled itself back sharply from my face like a girl that won't be kissed, leaning back from the waist, reluctant. I was pirouetting backwards on my heel, left foot in the air and the stone ear was loose in my hand, snapped. Looking down to see how I was going to land, I found I wasn't falling. I was sticking out at right-angles to the face, turning like a door on the hinge of my hooked fingers. I shut the door without haste, and then – so far away from myself that it seems now as if I'd watched someone else doing it – I repeated every move but the snatch, and there was the mutilated stump of the ear under my palm, harsh and friendly, with a green stain of wet across it. The rest went with the impersonal precision of a three-mover chess problem when you've seen through it. I only knew two things – I *must not* hurry; but I must lose no time in getting somewhere to feel frightened in. I managed both, feeling, oh, why, why, why can't I always climb like this? ...

... When Paul joined me some minutes later, he handed over a thick grey chunk of stone with a flat side to it, new-broken, and stained green with wet. 'It beats me,' he said, 'why people do such things. Why do they?'

### **Dodgy Down-climbing on Pollux An Intriguing Failure**

*David Craig (2002)*

What jolted my vision of rock into new focus was that the crucial part of the day was spent down-climbing – about ninety feet on a so-called Hard V. Diff. [*Pollux at the wet end of Black Crag, Dovedale*] ...

... I knew roughly where we were aiming, an alleged groove .... as I followed the only sequence of holds and protection points that seemed to offer amongst holdless bulging slabs freckled darkly with lichen, grassy joints .... heather tussocks ... which did occasionally mask small, earthy ledges.

I said 'protection points'. I found a decent slot for a small hex at 25 feet, then nothing until I arrived at a platform kneedeep in bright green grass .... The platform was a haven and I went for it in a state of edgy thankfulness. It was about 90 feet up. It would obviously provide some sort of security.

Not all that much. The blind quality of this end of the crag was almost complete. No joints deepened into cracks. No rocks separated into flakes. Any holes or pockets were insignificant dimples .... In the end I established a No. 2 Rock, sideways, in a rough-edged slot .... A pair of footholds gained me six feet. Bridged, I stared upwards, and saw .... only a shallow valley between wet bulges which you might have fancied paddling up in dry conditions – not today, not this year, not above that run-out and that little sideways-sprouting wire .... I'll have to down-climb.

The moves aren't hard. And this is only Hard V. Diff. – isn't it? Each 2 x 6 inch ledge looks impossibly far away as I stretch for it with my toes. If only I could grow longer, like a slug! .... I feel [*like*] a shipwrecked man as the boat turns turtle and he must crawl backwards down the hull, trying to cling by his fingertips to the rivets.

At mid-point I have to thrust my feet through springy heather clumps to rediscover the hidden earthy ledge. Further down Chris can start to talk my toes into slots invisible below little caves. I can even adjust my one piece of protection, substituting an ordinary krab for the more expensive screw-gate – because all the gear, such as it is, will have to be left in situ. On firm – well, spongy – ground again, we have a giggly reunion and I find I'm a bit shaky, as I've never been after such epics as I've had, on Harlot Face, Castle Rock, or Cascade on Pavey East ...

... I'd like to have been prepared for [*the climb*] by a more realistic grading than Hard V. Diff. Pollux is roughly as hard as Stoat's Crack on Pavey, which gets Hard Severe. And talking of Pavey, why is Crescent Slabs only Severe when the 'oblique traverse into a shallow groove' on pitch 2 is delicate 4b?

## **Fors et Fortuna in Mediis Rebus The Great Central Buttress of Scaffell**

*C.F. Holland (1921)*

A most remarkable incident had occurred [*during the first ascent of the Crack on CB*] while the crack was being led. Sansom was hanging on by indifferent sloping handholds on or near the lower end of the great chockstone, and Herford [*leading*] was standing on his shoulders, about to make the first step of the last tremendous solo effort. The initial difficulty confronting him was that of getting a purchase with his left foot in a groove unsuitably shaped for that purpose. Sansom's left hand began to slip under the great strain, and must inevitably have given way very soon, in which case he would have come off, though only a foot or two, on to the loops. Herford's fall, unavoidable if this had happened, would have been a very serious affair indeed, and even if his

rope had held it is impossible to see how we below could have given any assistance, beyond keeping the ropes tight, if either had been injured in any way.

At this moment, however, the great Goddess of Luck took a hand in the game. I call it "Luck"; there are those who would name it differently.

Finding himself unable to get his foot as he wanted it, Herford stepped back and accidentally put his foot on the slipping hand, thus holding it in position; and the difficult step was made so quickly that Sansom was able to support the double weight till that of the leader was removed.

## **Morpheus on Moss Ghyll**

### **Two Climbs**

*R.S.T. Chorley (1936-7)*

...like all young climbers of that period [1919] I was very anxious to venture up Moss Ghyll .... Harry Harland came up and volunteered to enlist his family party. There were he, and Evelyn, and Edward, quite a lad in those days .... We soon found that one rope – I think it must have been an 'eighty' was altogether too short for four climbers. The result was that Edward who was last man had to untie at the foot of every pitch. This made progress slow and gave the unoccupied members of the party plenty of time to admire the scenery .... The cold northerly wind seemed to have swept every particle of haze from the sky .... Ireland .... was unbelievably clear .... To the north ... we could see right across the Galloway peninsula to a sea dotted with islands ...

... Meanwhile the climbers progressed slowly but without incident until they reached the last pitch – the direct finish. H.H. insisted that I should take the outside route which he said was much the more sporting .... This pitch was rather a nuisance with our short rope and there was a good deal of untying and tying up again. Moreover H.H. came by the inside route and got a bit stuck with the chockstone. It is a very unpleasant place for a big man ...

... When after a long delay we lowered the rope for Edward, there was no response. What had happened to him? By craning over it was just possible to see him, and there he was comfortably asleep. To go to sleep on a difficult rock climb seemed to me a most remarkable feat. Years after, however, I had the even stranger experience of holding a man who dozed off while he was actually climbing a pitch – the scoop on Intermediate Gully .... However the job was to awaken Edward. We halloed and howled at him till we were hoarse, but he was dreaming about adventurous hill climbing exploits on his motor cycle, and refused to return to the cold reality of rock climbing under his own steam. Then for some time we dropped

pebbles but with equal lack of success. There seemed nothing for it but to climb down and awaken him and I was just lowering myself over the edge when he stirred and waked. Before long he had joined us, and we strolled out on to the top of the mountain. It was 12 o'clock. We had taken seven hours and were very hungry because we had had practically no food.

### **See What He's Doing and Tell Him to Stop It A Soldier Remembers**

*S.B. Beck (1944)*

... a few of the inconsequentialities and trivialities linger from days that have otherwise gone. I recall the friend who was grappling with the second pitch of Kern Knotts *West Buttress* before a critical gallery, and while attempting the swing to the left from the top of the groove slipped, swung away from the rock, and hung suspended in mid-air, slowly rotating in helpless dignity – and the indignant cry of an alarmed wife. 'John! John! Come down there at once!' Never have I seen the most undisciplined husband more reluctant to obey wifely command!

## **CHARACTERS**

### **Poet Laureate and the Neighbours William Wordsworth and the Lake Country**

*E.M. Turner (1950)*

Wordsworth was not a typical native of the Lake District. True, he was born in Cockermouth and lived for the greater part of his life in the District .... But he never mingled with his neighbours in their sports or pastimes; fox hunting, high up on the fells, it was not for him to describe. For all his praise of the shepherd, too, he apparently knew nothing of farming or sheep breeding, even as an amateur. Nor did he mix with his neighbours socially, or gossip or joke with them. What in their turn did they think of him? The story goes that one morning Hartley Coleridge, the son of the poet Coleridge, asked the old stone breaker by Rydal Lake what was the latest news, and was told that there was 'nowte varry particlar, only auld Wudsworth's brocken lowce agecan.' This is a reference to Wordsworth's habit of quoting poetry aloud on his country walks, which the country folk took to be a sure sign of mental aberration. On another occasion a stranger, resting at a cottage in Rydal, inquired if Wordsworth made himself congenial to his neighbours. 'Well,' she said, 'he sometimes goes booin'



his pottery about t'roads an' t'fields an' taks na nooatish o' nea'body; but at udder times he'll say good morning, Dolly, as sensible as oyder you or me.'

### **Anthropoid Steeplejack Cat Among the Pigeons**

*Ivan Waller (1977-8)*

... about this time Jack Longland and I started taking Alf Bridge climbing with us. He was a steeplejack by trade and lived with his mother in Chapel Street, Levenshulme. He was a dutiful and devoted son and a very sentimental individual. His work had given him terrific arms and shoulders, and when he started climbing with us he used to wear out the tops of his gym shoes, trailing his legs behind him like a mermaid. We explained to him that you could use your feet on rocks as well as on the rungs of a ladder, and he became a very good climber indeed, copying Jack's technique and supplementing it with his own great strength and endurance.

### **Thank God for the Two-hour Rule \* Interviews with Club Celebrities**

*H.E. Scott (1931)*

Mr. J.H. Doughty

... Mr Doughty's aptitude for Committee work is well-known, especially to the Rucksack Club. If no urgent matter is on the Agenda (or even if one is) he is prepared to revive the question which was voted upon and settled last month or last year, to shed fresh light upon it, to view it through differently coloured spectacles, and generally speaking to relieve the monotony of the proceedings. Fastening unerringly upon each debating point, he develops his argument with remorseless logic and devastating lucidity – at the same time gazing benevolently at the Chairman through his spectacles until that unfortunate individual is reduced to the condition of a rabbit in front of the boa-constrictor. Any Committee on which Mr. Doughty sits, and when he sits on a Committee he *does* sit upon it, need have no fear that its meetings will suffer from lack of accurate and logical statement of the opposition point of view.

\* [For about 40 years the FRCC Committee has imposed upon itself a standing order that no meeting shall continue for more than two hours after its commencement without a formal motion to do so being proposed, seconded, and carried. It very rarely does, and then for not more than 15 minutes ]

## Bon Viveur In Memoriam

*W.E. Kendrick, J.G. Thomas (1975)*

### George Leask Manson, 1949 -1976

... Though as a climber he did not have the temperament of a leader, he was a very accomplished climber and would splendidly second climbs of every degree of technical difficulty ...

... he was a *bon viveur* in the best sense, who played that role with his tongue firmly in his cheek. That is, he treated good living with the seriousness it deserves, but tempered this attitude with irony which preserved it from excess. He would startle hut users with the lavishness of the meals he would prepare and consume, not least in the quantity and variety of the wine he provided. In the period of post-war rationing George would turn a tin of Irish Stew, with the addition of other ingredients he had contrived to unearth in obscure stores in darkest Liverpool, into a delectable goulash. In the context of the sometimes meagre kitchen resources of some of the huts these complicatedly prepared meals seemed an elaborate spoof played out in public, and so they were, but the whole undertaking was at the same time deadly serious, and was thus enjoyed in a double sense; at once a meal and a joke.

## The Jaws of Borrowdale An Encounter with McHaffie

*Martin Cooper (2004)*

Ray McHaffie was born in Carlisle and first came to notoriety as a member of a gang of Teddy Boys; he was part of what his sister Ivy describes as 'a rough crowd'. He had jobs as a joiner and a sawyer and, apparently, as a grave digger before working for the Water Board but, Ivy says, it was moving to Keswick that changed him and, "he has never looked back since". His early climbing antics, of course, spread his fame much wider than Keswick. Trevor Jones, in *Cumbrian Rock*, describes Ray's first climb, a solo ascent of *Kern Knotts Crack*, and the party piece which attracted media attention and earned him some money in the early 1960s, his ascents of *Little Chamonix* in roller skates and boxing gloves. This semi-apocryphal story has long been one of the legends of Lakeland climbing but anyone who doesn't believe it need only take a look at the photographs still on display in the Dog and Gun at Keswick ...

... It was probably hard to imagine in the 1960s, that anyone would ever surpass Beetham's achievement of ninety one new routes in Borrowdale in thirty

one years .... however .... he passed Bentley Beetham midway through 1979, after a mere sixteen years on the job.

## ECCENTRICITIES

### Grim Future for Great Gable

#### Random thoughts

*Wilson Hey (1931)*

If we go on as we are going, I visualise in this century at a new Wasdale Head, a new industry – a Fremden Industrie – with its concomitant services. Tall, loud Ritson hotels, with bazaars alongside, an aerodrome, a mule service over Esk Hause for the romantic, and a mountain railway, with its Styhead junction of course carefully camouflaged, with its branches to Lord's Rake and Green Ledge, with halts at the foot of Needle Gully and Doctor's Chimney and doubtless a lift to the Scawfell subterranean refuge. Simple Cumberland shepherds in plus-fours and with badges, centred by a very large Needle, will spend their time either sitting on that dear old wall waiting for custom or wandering into the Tyson cinemas. There will be climbers with luxurious rucksacks and bags full of tools to be used on every conceivable occasion according to the Wasdale Rules. Tiers of grandstands with comfortable plush-covered armchaired seats will surround the "Dress Circle", whilst the "mournful silence of the fells" will be drowned by the droning of the day-trip aeroplanes encircling our summits, from Blackpool and the Isle of Man. But more folk will enjoy it, you say ...

### Night-Walker and ... Ghosts?

#### Tours in Lakeland

*A.B. Reynolds (1929)*

*[The writer was 'racing round all the major crags in the district and doing a climb on each', 2.30 pm to 2.00 pm on July 13-14.]*

Regular night-walkers, who are familiar with the way in which trees and other objects appear to leap out of the darkness as you approach them, will sympathise with my nervous starts as each thorn tree, on the way up Brown Tongue, pounced on me like a wild beast out of the night. My nerves must have been badly shaken by the time I reached the stream, for, after bending down to drink, I stood up, slightly dazed, to see three tall white figures, who stood over me for a second and then resumed their natural function by splashing quietly

into the pool. There were no ghosts to disturb my rest at Hollow Stones [1.05 – 9.05 am] and I slept like a log on the softest turf in the Lake District.

## Sodom and Gomorrah Memorabilia

*H.M. Kelly (1975-6)*

It was on 4<sup>th</sup> August, 1919, that C.F. Holland and I stood on the west side of Pillar Rock contemplating a further onslaught on this part of High Man .... We .... were attracted by a long splayed-out chimney, above an overhang, which rose to the top of the crag .... Having .... decided on the course of our venture we found ourselves faced with a new problem for Holland's rubbers were in a sorry state of disrepair – half the sole of each had come away from its upper .... but Holland, optimistic as ever .... thought he had found a solution – this was that, when stepping up to a foothold he would jerk his knee upwards, causing the dangling flap of the shoe to do likewise and then quickly slap his foot down onto the hold .... for some time .... I could hear Holland happily flip-flapping his way behind me .... for a couple of hundred feet .... However .... I realised circumstances and Holland's rubbers and the revolting crack were against our proceeding further in this direction. Not only had I greasy rock to contend with but also lack of rope. I had already run out a good fifty feet and still could not see any adequate stance and belay to which I could bring my partner. The only apparent security seemed to be no nearer than the top of the chimney requiring another fifty feet of rope which I did not have. So, forsaking the chimney I made an upward traverse for some feet over a slab to the right and found .... a rib which provided a stance of sorts and a reasonable belay. Holland was now out of my sight and after assuring him that I was reasonably comfortable and ready for him to join me he started to do so but after ascending a few feet of the chimney the flip-flap footholds apparently petered out and with a cry of "I'm off" I found him, after a swing of several feet, added to by those of the shoulder-belay gradually bringing his fall to a halt, grinning, but breathlessly peering up at me some distance below .... as I was swinging the rope over a bulge, in order to have more direct contact with my partner, I knocked the pipe out of his mouth, distinctly and mournfully, it tinkled its way down the crag until it reached the screes. Furthermore, after joining me and when I was bringing him up the remaining thirty feet or so to the top of the crag and our climb, I mis-manipulated the rope again and in doing so disturbed a small stone which after impact drew blood from Holland's forehead and nose .... What with falling off; loss of pipe; and giving him what he described as a "bloody coxcomb" I was well and truly put on the mat. Told: I was the most careless and incompetent climber he had ever met; and, as regards rope management: "Well,

we had just had two prime examples of my inability regarding that. Moreover, not only did I go about splitting open climbers' skulls, but, more heinous still, I had just committed, what was to him, the unpardonable sin of using a split infinitive in my apologies for my remissness." ...

... With such an episodic day behind us – two new first class climbs, snatched from the jaws of death, one might say .... as we wended our way home ....[my thoughts] on the whole were elated ... His, apparently, were of a more sombre and sardonic nature .... For as we neared Burnthwaite Farm, our headquarters, he shattered the silence by exclaiming, "Kelly, if you want names for those climbs we've done today, I've got a couple!" Relieved at his relaxation of the tension between us I gladly responded by asking what they were and got the significant reply – "SODOM AND GOMORRAH!" \*

\* *Convention prevented these names from being used and until the 1968 edition of the Pillar Guide they were known as Route 1 and Route 2*

### **Eustace Thomas's Blood Pressure Interviews with Club Celebrities**

*H.E. Scott (1927)*

(3). – Mr. Eustace Thomas

... "Rest," he replied, "is quite unnecessary. As soon as I feel my muscles beginning to tire, I break into a run. This brings into action a different set of muscles, and after, say, ten minutes running I am invariably quite refreshed and able to resume my walk."

"Do you not feel the continuous exertion harmful to the system?" I asked.

... "Regular movement doesn't affect the heart, [*he responded*] it is sudden jerks, such as jumping, dashing after trams, etc. that are harmful. I test my blood pressure once a week. I do it with the speedometer of my car. I write the chart on paper which I cut out of my sister's music book, as this is ready ruled." Fishing out of his pocket a small piece of paper .... He said: "This is yesterday's chart, representing a period of twelve hours. You will see that the pressure remains perfectly regular."

### **Grudging Welcome at Brackenclose Youth at the Door**

*Tom Price (1992)*

... we did eventually find the way down [*from Sty Head Tarn*] and went lurching down in the teeth of the storm until we reached the last levels of Wasdale

Head. Endless columns of rain still swept up the valley from the Irish Sea. We trudged on until we came to the lake. There was a light showing in Brackenclose. We looked at the time and found to our astonishment that it was only nine o'clock. We thought it must be at least one in the morning.

We knew Brackenclose, having stayed there with our [*Leeds UMC*] president G. Graham Macphee. We now stood at the door, a forlorn, hapless crew, wet through. We knocked. It opened, revealing a vision of dryness, warmth and light.

We explained that we were a university mountaineering club, that our President was a member of the Fell & Rock and though he was not at present with us would no doubt be willing to vouch for us. We were becoming seriously affected by the cold and wet, etc., etc.

'This is a private hut', said the spokesman of the dry people within, speaking in what we instantly registered as an Oxford accent. 'The Rules of the Club say that guests must be accompanied by a Member.' .... We took ourselves off, gathering the rags of our dignity around us, resolved to seek shelter in the barn at Wasdale Head Hall, half a mile away.

Our interview at the door of the farm was a good deal shorter. At first we thought we discerned some glimmer of sympathy in the eye of the farmer's wife, but when she saw that there were girls in the party .... it was thumbs down from then on .... We had the choice, she said, between Brackenclose (half a mile), the hotel (two miles) and the Youth Hostel (four miles) ...

... There is a certain kinship among climbers, even between respectable club climbers and those beyond the pale. For them [at Brackenclose], turning us away must have felt a little like turning away poor relations ...

... We went back to Brackenclose .... The climbers .... had had half an hour and more to listen to the rain beating on the windows and to compare their lot with ours as they sat toasting their toes before a roaring fire, mugs of tea in hand.

They relented, and our troubles were over. Some brave and kindly soul must have entered his name in the book as the member responsible for us .... We paid up, we crept obsequiously around keeping out of people's way and cooking our soggy food. The girls, stripping off wet clothes and combing out their dripping hair .... made themselves exceedingly pleasant to the company at the fireside. On the whole our intrusion did no-one much harm and perhaps a bit of good. It was only years later, however, that I realised fully the nature of the dilemma we put those people in.

But the point of this story .... was climbing into that top corner of the three-tier bunkhouse, close under the sloping dry timbers of the roof, to be cradled in the total luxury of dry blankets, and to hear the rain furiously pattering and hissing on the slates a few inches above me. I was at one with all animals, in all dens, all over the world.

## Forty Years On at Brackenclose Brackenclose Memories. 1947-48

*Des Birch (1988)*

Some memorable moments from a holiday at Brackenclose in April, 1948.

**2 April:** Walked from Brackenclose to Keswick. Boots were being re-nailed by Robinson of Keswick. Clinkers throughout. Collected boots, bus back to Seatoller, walked to Brackenclose ...

... **7 April:** Walked with Bob Holmes (now Professor of Anatomy at Leeds University) to climb on Dow Crag. Bob fell off Murray's Direct, so we walked down to Consiton for tea at the Black Bull. After tea we walked to Brackenclose. It took four hours there and four hours back, but it was a grand and memorable day.

Other Memories ...

... The roller

For many years this was the entertainment, and I remember one young lady who could roll and remove clothing to bra and pants whilst rolling.

The Four Burner Primus

A non-member who shall be nameless sold cups of tea for a whole week to walkers going over Burmoor, using this apparatus!

The Daley Rope

Used by me (aged 16) because I had no rope, and by others. If my memory serves me correctly, it was 100 feet of Alpine line.

The Ellis-Carr Ice-axe.

Used by me on many occasions, including a superb ascent of Moss Ghyll.

## FRCC Marriage Market Editor's Notes

*R.S.T. Chorley (1925)*

It has been a great year for marriages, as we have not been allowed to forget, and in at least three of them both parties have been members – others are threatening. The Honorary Secretary (L.W. Somervell) and Betty de Fonblanque, the Honorary Editor (R.S.T. Chorley) and Katharine C. Hopkinson, R.B. Graham and Gertrude Anson, have provided the inter-club marriages. There should also be mentioned T. Howard Somervell and Miss Hope-Simpson, who we hope will one day become a member. The Editor would like to take this opportunity of thanking his many friends in the Club for their kindness and good wishes.

## Quivering Brethren (\*) – Christmas Ascents The Sad Road

Gordon Dyke (1969)

... it was hot and the full melancholy that seems to fill the air around Cloggy made its presence felt with ever increasing weight as we snailed forward under the pressure of our climbing gear. Slowly the images of two decades came back: faces and voices that have long since changed ... and as I reflected I could not but compare them with the present climbers. They were indeed different from the hardware men, their leads were bold and often without runners at all. They were wild, but honest...

Many of the ghosts who walked this steep track, this sad road to Cloggy, formed a group called The Quivering Brethren, who on Christmas Day would gather at the foot of the Grimmett on Craig-yr-Ysfa in order to ascend this climb in one long stream. All were allowed to be drunk except the leader and each had to wear a paper hat and carry an inflated balloon. For an ascent to be deemed accomplished one had to reach the top of the climb still wearing a paper hat and without bursting the balloon; further, one had to pull a Christmas cracker with another, both climbers to be between stances. Such meetings often had a following of sightseers and on the big occasion of 1948 the amphitheatre brim was crowded with over a hundred hostellers and climbers, all intent on being entertained freely; they were not disappointed ...

\* [See *Cold Comfort Farm*, by Stella Gibbons]

## Defence Against Unwanted Stringalong Hence, Vain Deluding Joys

C.S. Tilly (1951)

The Visitor was not very tall but was so narrow that he looked immense. The widest thing about him was his moustache. He was very wet, but there was a gleam in his eye which should have warned us. He was carrying a rope and a certain amount of ironmongery. We asked him in [*into the C.I.C. hut*] for a drink, and he told us his story. He was camping with a companion in Glen Nevis and the intention had apparently been to climb. Consequently, the Visitor was somewhat surprised when, on the first morning, the Companion announced that he would climb on the Thursday of next week. The Visitor thought this unreasonable: we kept open minds on the subject. Jack suggested that the Visitor might call at the Nevis hostel where he would probably find someone who was unattached, but the suggestion did not seem to appeal. Instead, the Visitor had another, and better idea.



It was, that he should join us and that we should thenceforth climb in two pairs. The situation was getting beyond me; I effaced myself and left it to Jack's more agile brain. The silence became oppressive. 'Well ...' began Jack. 'Or perhaps,' interposed the Visitor, 'we had only one Leader.' 'Yes,' said Jack, a shade too quickly, 'that was it, we had only one Leader.' Hannah expelled her pent-up breath and dropped the kettle, and Jack, who has a tendency to embroider, suggested that if the Visitor were to lead one rope ... But no, the Visitor was not a Leader.

We heard the not unmusical tinkling of his karabiner for some time after he had disappeared into the mist.

### **A Resistible Invitation Scottish Interlude**

*Jack Carswell (1959)*

*[after an ascent of Agag's Groove]* That night in Fort William we dined on fish and chips eaten from the paper, while sitting on bollards on the quayside feeding the gulls with scraps. As we climbed back up the steep little street into the town, we met a small Scotsman and a large Scotswoman lending each other support as they staggered down the hill together. This sight proved altogether too much for Malcolm and he gave a loud laugh as we passed. This incensed the little Scot who came back to remonstrate, starting with the remark, 'I'll have you know that lady is my wife.' The new twist to the old tag was lost on nobody but him. We left the diplomacy in Malcolm's professional hands, but even he, armed with a bribe of fish and chips from his paper, failed to achieve any result, and we found ourselves invited to a gang fight in the park. This provided the opening we needed and we despatched him to look for his gang while whilst we went for our car. Some time later as we drove away towards Glen Nevis, we saw him still looking for either gang or wife, if indeed he had not forgotten about both by then.

### **GLASS CEILING ...?**

#### **Women Must Lead Climbing for Women**

*Mrs H.M. Waterlow (1916)*

Even in these days, when women are doing men's work on every side, the old conventions still linger, and we have not yet reached the time when the Alpine club shall open its doors to ladies and all the climbing clubs in the kingdom be "mixed" ...

... If women wish to get the true salt and savour of climbing, to my mind they must do it by themselves ... *[there]* is no reason why men and women should not be members of the same club, but women must do their own spade work and earn their own laurels before they can meet the men on equal terms. It is better to do a third-rate climb as leader than a first-rate one with a man holding the rope above you, and there is more sport in leading a party of girls through ten miles of mist and blizzard than in doing a forty mile tramp with a man to carry your rucksack

## Sensations of Rock-climbing

### The Good Young Days

*Dorothy Pilley Richards (1956)*

*[recollecting Pat and H.M. Kelly]*

Here is a note from a letter of Pat's about her climbing of Jones from Deep Ghyll alone. 'A bite of lunch in Deep Ghyll, some moderate climbing to warm up and to gain confidence, and then a delight which only a rock-climber can appreciate – to stand on a mere inch or so of rock and look down an almost sheer 200 feet: the awesome exhilaration of a delicate, airy, upward step to a toehold on which to balance before grasping a firm bit of rock securely with both hands and so raising oneself on and up to a land of pure delight – out in the sunshine to sit on top of Pisgah and have a view to satisfy all hill lovers. Just across the way was the Pike, with its summit cairn and new War Memorial. Gable, Kirkfell, Yewbarrow, the Screes: the very names will call up a picture to one who knows.' It shows what climbing was to this remarkable personality who was the chief inspirer of the Pinnacle Club.

## How We Women Climb Now

### Climbing is More a Dancing Thing

*Angela Soper (1986)*

Strange how I used to believe that climbing was a matter of strength and courage. Was it because other climbers were men, much stronger than me? Why did I depend so much on my fingers, unreliable at the best of times? Just because the old brown guidebook described a hand traverse, why didn't I think of feet? It took me far too long to realise that climbing is more a dancing thing, especially for a woman. *Technique* and courage. Then, the leader never fell. Now, if she doesn't fall occasionally (onto perfect protection) she isn't climbing at her highest standard. Then, four points of contact. Now, put your spare foot out in space and feel your balance improve. Push up, rock over, lock off ...

... Over and over again, I must have tackled things the wrong way. Now, guided by the technical grades, I approach a lead with only mild 'butterflies', expecting to see what to do and enjoy doing it.

Like Extol .... The part of me that always stands aside from our antics seemed to say, 'What are they doing, these middle-aged women?' And the active part replied, 'Rubbish. Let them stay young and daft until they're old and strange' ...

... Vector was beautiful, marred only by chalk. It is done in the head like an intricate dance; think of the right sequence and the rest happens. Technique and balance, judgement and timing, grace and style are the things which matter. But why didn't I know that before?

## THINKING ABOUT IT

### Mountain Painter Painting Weather

*W. Heaton Cooper (1951)*

For anyone who attempts to paint among the mountains of Britain, the weather is just about as important as it is to the farmer. When the weather is quite decisive .... the issue is clear, and, like the farmer, one finds something else to do. But it is those subtle variations and changes on days of doubtful or capricious weather that present the painter with his most difficult and interesting problems ...

... In British mountains, especially those nearest the western seaboard, the sky and land are so intermingled that weather and light can make or unmake a good subject. Too often one has returned to an interesting subject, and wondered why it was so dull. On the other hand, sometimes an object one has seen almost every day without any discernment can, one day, suddenly come alive, very often due to some fleeting effect of light or weather. But don't expect it to happen every time ...

On most days of the year among our hills, there is a veil of moisture, either suspended or falling, between oneself and the distances. It shows most obviously in the farthest distances, but, in a lesser degree, in the darks of the middle distance, and it is here that one can gauge its colour value, for it is still possible to compare it with local colour showing in the lighter parts of the middle distance. This veil is the effect of certain light on certain density of moisture, and is important to the painter, for it determines the 'colour of the day' and, so, its mood.

## Mountain Photographer Peru – 1963

Alfred Gregory (1964)

I just wanted to photograph Peru. Is there a better reason for a journey? It interferes with mountaineering of course - this photographic lark I mean. Well, you cannot show people pictures of mountains all the time and one mountain looks like another if you see a lot of them, so you need to turn your cameras on more interesting things like Indians, tropical rivers and the insects of the Amazon forest. I did not always think like this and once, it seems impossible but it is true, I did not even have a camera and went rock-climbing in the rain. It comes of being a veteran, I suppose.

## Photographer In Action Recollections of George Abraham

H. Westmorland (1965-6)

We were climbing the Zsigmondy Kamin route [*on the Cima Piccola di Lavaredo*] .... The drill was that Menardi led me on one rope and that George and Ashley followed on a second rope, George leading and Ashley laden with the heavy camera, plates and tripod. At good view points for the better pitches they would stop to take photographs. I remember so well seeing George and the camera tied to a belay with the footing for only two of the tripod legs, the other in mid air. George was in much the same fix, but with only two legs to work with, his head under the black cloth focusing the lens on the great vertical wall of dolomite. Generally when George or Ashley took off the lens cap, Menardi and I had to hold 'action' positions for at least 40 seconds, sometimes more. It all took time, but what a wonderful record of your holiday when the completed pictures came to you. The brothers were truly the real pioneers of photographs showing action on the crags, even though they were 'stills'. The photographs are world famous.

## Savage Book Review Reviews 1924

W.T. Palmer

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING. By Francis A. Collins (John Long, 10s. 6d.)

A quagmire of inaccuracies by an American who has compiled these slip-shod chapters from slip-shod authorities. The bibliography shows that the writer had access to some better works (by Geoffrey Winthrop Young and G.D.

Abraham), but chose the most blatant self-advertisers as his guide. Easily the worst book on the mountains.

### **Safe Climbing Is In the Head**

**Review of *Mountaineering*, by Alan Blackshaw**

*Harold Drasdo (1965-6)*

... his solution to the problem of safety, like that of all earlier writers and like that of all contemporary teaching in mountain centres, is purely to discuss and evaluate equipment and techniques and to name those dangers most easily categorised. There is an implication that if the beginner studies these affairs conscientiously he will survive.

There is, however, another side to staying alive, though to state it briefly is to overstate it. There is a sense in which advances in equipment and technique affect performance rather than safety. In practice, the individual's ambitions almost invariably keep pace with the increase in capability which follows these advances; and so his safety-margin remains as marginal as before. Given a certain standard of intelligence the safety-margin seems to be a constant in the head rather than a variable on the soles of the boots .... Let us admit at last that to climb is dangerous ....

as a cumulative list of deceased members displayed each year in [*the Alpine Climbing Group's*] Bulletin shows at a glance, prospects of survival for experts are less good than for the average climber.

### **Generation Gap**

**The President's Address, 1993**

*Rod Valentine (1994)*

A few months ago I spied a golden opportunity to poach some really young talent by attending a youth meet run by another club, of which, incidentally, I am also a member. I arrived at Malham on the Saturday morning and the weather wasn't very good so we were forced to climb off the catwalk on the lower central wall on the French-style bolted routes. Now, it's so steep down there that it doesn't get wet even when it's raining, so it's OK to climb there anytime. Anyway, they put me with this youth who looked about a third of my age. He was twice my height, half my weight, sported a couple of ear-rings and a pony tail: God, I felt ancient, not to put too fine a point on it. Anyway, I was belaying and I watched this youth run up E5 after E5 then E6 after E6. I was struggling, but there didn't seem to be much conversation with the kid, he was just a climbing machine, and as you know I like

a bit of a crack on the crags. So, I asked him if he liked anything else other than climbing: did he like fishing or drinking or anything. No, nothing. So I thought he might be one of these financial wizards or into current affairs or something like that, so I asked him what he thought about the movement within the E.R.M. [*Exchange Rate Mechanism*] "Oh, God," he said, "desperate, desperate. I totally failed to flash it. It took me ages to work out the moves between the third and fourth bolt, but I did manage it on my third red point." He seriously thought I was talking about a route! So maybe we are better off with slightly more mature members in the club after all.

## Why Climb?

### Failures

J.H. Doughty (1927)

By the time we [*novices on Pillar Old West*] started our climb the whole crag was swathed in mist: boiling masses of vapour surged around us .... We got as far as a point where it seemed necessary to advance across a smooth holdless ledge, edged by nothingness and leading to chaos - or so it appeared to our disordered imaginings. We tried, retreated, tried again; held counsel; and at last turned tail and fled - if fleeing is a term that can properly be applied to our cautious and gingerly retrogression.

Were we craven? I do not know; nor do I particularly care. Perhaps had we pushed on we should have won the summit; and perhaps we should have slipped off, and had our corpses borne to Wasdale Head; which would have sadly upset Mrs. Wilson's domestic economy. ...

... the failure was full of glamour, excitement, romance, it abides in the memory with a far more lively vigour than ... cheap, banal success. ...

... The mentors of our youth are never tired of impressing on their charges how much more important it is to play the game than to win; but they continue to keep up an elaborate paraphernalia of rewards, and focus the spotlight of approbation on success. Our Press groans under a burden of loud lament for new lost supremacies - from the daily papers with their clamour for new boxing "hopes" to the *Alpine Journal* with its plaintive "Where are les jeunes Britanniques?"; and at the same time we are continually fed with aphorisms of the "to travel hopefully" ... order. .... the truth seems to be that this is essentially a question of personal feeling. A philosophy which would lead us to accept with complacency a generally low level of achievement, or to exalt our own failures to the level of other people's success is a pretty feeble doctrine, with more than a suspicion of sour grapes about it; but so long as a man confines himself to the comparative valuation of his own experiences he is on surer ground, and that is as far as I would wish to go.

**Why Climb, Indeed?****Postscript***Claud Schuster (1940)*

There are few more delightful exercises than to sit below the top of the Riffelhorn on warm rocks and to lower your grand-daughter down the first hundred feet of the glacier couloir, and then hold the rope for her to ascend, pointing out her faults in style and remembering how rigorous teachers seized 'your' youth .... When ..... this comes upon you, and you feel a fatal tendency to reminiscence and anecdotage .... what is left to you? Long ago you have written all that was in you and spilt your experience in a hotch-potch of adventure and emotion ... But you must make the attempt and say, once more, how well worth while it was. Much of your time was wasted through sloth, or failing courage, or lack of imagination. But, where you seized on life with both hands, whether you succeeded or failed, there you triumphed.

I do not mean by this that it is a rational pastime, or even good mountaineering, to come down the Couloir du Lion in the middle of a hot August afternoon .... The dangers .... can neither be averted not subdued and I cannot see that any advantage is gained by incurring them .... The last thing to be inculcated is a challenge to danger for its own sake or for the sensation to be plucked from it. There must be dangers in this as in all forms of bodily activity. It is good mountaineering to acquire the knowledge to recognise, and the skill and endurance to overcome them.

**And Finally . . .***unattributed (1923)*

The following wish was written in the scrap book of a girl of 12 after making her first climb:

To E.M.,

Benvenue,

August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915

May you always have a happy memory of your first mountain ascent, and may it lead you on to a love of outdoor life, and of all that the study of nature can teach.

As the years pass may you have the strength to climb, with eyes to see and a heart to know the secrets of the hills.

May you learn that in life, as on a mountain, though mists and clouds and swamps may threaten failure, yet by perseverance and care a summit may be gained or a difficulty be passed, and that He who made the hills will give help to those who lift their eyes to seek Him there. S.





## THE ELECTRONIC EARLY JOURNALS

### A Commentary

*Roderick Smith*

On the occasions when I stayed as a guest in our Club huts, well before I was elected to membership, I was fascinated to browse through the old copies of the Club's Journals in the book cases. I resolved to acquire a complete collection: a task finally completed many years later. Many others will have struggled with the same task. I confess I was off to a flying start with the purchase of a job lot, but with about a dozen gaps. These gaps needed resolution to fill, but eventually the set was complete.

As my contribution to the Club's centenary, I volunteered to make an electronic copy of the early Journals. The task proved much more time consuming than I had originally estimated, in fact something approaching two years of admittedly sporadic effort were needed. Initially, I experimented with the different forms which the copy might take, before deciding on as near perfect facsimile style as could be managed. This means that the imperfections of the copies from which I worked are also faithfully reproduced. I hope CD users will accept the occasional odd stain, blemishes, dirt marks or creases as certificates of authenticity! The working set was loose bound to facilitate flat bed scanning, but some pages were missing, particularly from the beginning and ends of the issues, and the occasional cover. I have tried as far as possible to fill in the gaps from my own set. The numbered "main" pages are now definitely complete.

The major task was to make some 2000 scanned pdf files: a repetitive job which needed concentration and constant checking to make sure, for example, that two pages had not been turned over as one. The photographs did not reproduce well in the facsimile format chosen, so a selection has been reproduced in a different format at higher quality in a separate album contained on the disc.

Separate files were made of the obituaries, taken from later issues of the Journal, of the Presidents and Editors of the period. Selected advertisements were also reproduced at higher definition and some notes on price comparisons were written. The bottom line of the price index is that prices of the earliest part of the period covered should be multiplied by about 80 to convert to equivalent present ones. Thus, for example, a night at the Sun Hotel at 3/6 in 1907, looks good at £7.94 now. But a Watson's "Argus" half-plate reflex camera, at £24 17s 6d, would cost the equivalent of a mighty £1975 pounds today. A selection of books relevant to the period of the Journals is provided.

Finally, in order to facilitate the location of items of particular interest, the list of contents and indexes which appeared, sometimes as loose inserts,

# SUN HOTEL,

✿ CONISTON. ✿

(Quarters of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club.)

T. SATTERTHWAITE, Proprietor.



## TARIFF.

BREAKFAST	...	...	1/6	2/-
LUNCHEON	...	..	1/9	3/6
DINNER	...	...	2/-	3/6
TEAS	...	...	6d.	2/-
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.. (Double)	..	..	3/6	4/6

Hot and Cold Baths. Public and Private Sitting Rooms.

Separate Drawing Room for Ladies.

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When corresponding with Advertisers, please mention this Journal.

have been collected together in one file, together with the indexes produced separately by Geoff Cram (Editor, 1979-86).

In view of the fact that each computer is different, certainly to the extent of the software running on it, all the software required to read the disc has been bundled on the disc to be installed if needed. Perhaps I should add that space on the disc has not proved to be a limitation. All the issues of the Journal to date could be easily contained on one disc. Perhaps this is a project for the future? It is hoped that the disc will load automatically and the menus offered will be intuitive and easy to follow.

The result is an electronic version of the first 15 issues of the Journal, Volumes 1-5, covering 1907 to 1921, which brings the earliest, and naturally the most difficult to obtain, issues within the reach of all. And what delights the volumes contain! It would be foolish to attempt to guide the reader to all the gems. Indeed it would spoil his enjoyment, but nevertheless, it seems that a general signposting to some particularly interesting and important articles might be appreciated and useful. The choice is, however, subjective and personal; each reader must pan for his or her own gems and place their personal bookmarks. Perhaps this commentary may go some way to overcoming the frustrations of electronic browsing, even with the assistance of the various indexes. The screen copy can never replace the feel, the smell and the ease of handling of the original hard copy, but I hope it goes part way to being an acceptable substitute.

Working our way through the various issues, we can follow the development of the Club.

Page 10 of issue 1 (hereafter written as e.g. p10, N1), discusses *The Origin and Aims of Our Club*. An article on *The Climbs of the English Lake District*, (p29, N1) by Williamson, reprinted from "All The Year Round", edited by Charles Dickens, Jr, gives us a glimpse of the state of affairs some sixteen years before the birth of our Club. We are brought up-to-date by a sequel, p143, N2, by George Abraham. Fred Botterill, of the eponymous Scafell slab, leads us on a more modest expedition with his account of the first ascent of *The Crescent Climb, Pavey Ark*, p81, N1. Protection techniques were discussed in *The Rope - As Used in Rock Climbing*, by Oliverson, p169, N2. We all would agree that "*the rope is the emblem of the union between members of the party*", but the details of belaying techniques are sketchy, going little beyond, "*a belay is anything upon which the rope can be hung in order to sustain weight*". Chubb writes on *The Right to Climb*, p160, N2, describing a failed bill by C P Trevelyan, which "*seeks to provide that no owner or occupier of uncultivated mountain or moorland shall be entitled to exclude any person from walking on such land for the purpose of recreation*". Well, it has taken 100 years, but achieved it we have! Over the same 100 years,

magnetic variation has declined. The 18 degrees west of north, p134, N2, has fallen to a negligible half a degree in the Lake District of 2006.

The first colour picture in the Journal, a painting of Pillar Rock, by A Heaton Cooper, formed the frontispiece of N3. Climbing is well represented in this number, with articles by Solly, *Some Early Recollections* (p234), *The Abbey Ridge, Great Gable*, by Botterill (p243) and Slingsby, *Reminiscences of a Few Days Climbing in the Fell Country*, (p253). The inadequate nature of belaying technique and equipment, were the causes of a fatality on Gable, p281, in which the "rope broke with a loud snap".

More reminiscences of *Early Lakeland Mountaineering*, from Seatreec (p3), appear in N4. The photograph of Keswick between pages 20 & 21, reproduced on this disc, is particularly striking when compared with the much more built-up view of today. The article, *Camera Work Among the Rocks*, Burrell, p102, reminds us how lucky we are to have photographs of the early days: how much easier (and cheaper) is the digital camera. Articles on the Weissshorn (p47) and the Valais (p93) take us back to a different age in the Alps.

Oppenheimer gives an account of *Climbing in the Buttermere Valley* in N5, p166, whilst Ashley Abraham, records (p184), the first traverse, in under 17 hours, of the main Cuillin Ridge in Skye, by Shadbolt (of Chimney fame) and McLaren, (Club member). The death of Edward Whymper is noted on p251.

The *Climbs on Scafell Pinnacle* are described by Sansom and Herford in N6, p296, and Herford gives an account of his *Traverse of Scafell Crags* on p 327. Moving abroad, *The Peak of Teneriffe* (p306), was visited by Thorpe well before low-cost airlines. Field, recalls a tour of *The Vorarlberg* (p354), in Austria, a country whose mountains are under represented in our Journal.

N7 contains several accounts of mountaineering abroad, an activity to be sadly curtailed in the next few years, the Pyrenees (p30), the Dolomites (p 48, Herford), Tuscany (p59) and the Wellenkuppe, Zermatt (p81). A curiosity is a note by Millican Dalton, the hermit of Borrowdale, *A Camping Holiday*, p76. This number is particularly rich in interesting photographs, not least a portfolio of Club officers.

N8, published in late 1914, is noteworthy for two major articles: *The First Ascent of Napes Needle*, by the President, W P Haskett Smith (p5), the classic, *Scafell Central Buttress*, by Sansom (p17). Millican Dalton again appears with a curiosity, *Dove Nest, Glaramara* (p78), a place where many have amused ourselves. That the war had started is noted by the Editor in his *Foreword* (p3), written in a tone which strongly suggests that what was going to come was completely unanticipated. (An unfortunate page numbering error occurred in this issue. N8, being the 2nd issue of Vol 3, should have been numbered continuing from the last page of N7. In fact it was restarted from 1. N9 also starts from page 1: it would have been difficult to do otherwise! Subse-

quent issues are numbered continuously through the three issues comprising a Volume.)

N9, 1915, titles itself, *War Issue: Mountaineering Adventures at Home and in the Lands of Our Allies*. The Editor notes (p3), "the absence of practically every member of the Club on war service at home or abroad has caused unusual difficulty and delay in obtaining material". The Journal begins with a series of letters from members *With The Colours*, and the obituary of "the first member to lay down his life in the war", Neville Fletcher, p15. Walter Weston, still today fondly remembered in Japan as the father of Japanese mountaineering, gives an account of *Two Climbs in the Japanese Alps*, p75. *Fighting on the Oriler Range*, Davies p51, reminds us of a front of the war less well known in Britain, but the scene of bitter fighting. (Readers are directed to the relatively recent novel, *A Soldier of the Great War*, Mark Helprin, Hutchinson, 1992, for further insights).

N10, contains obituaries for Oppenheimer (p64) and Herford (p72). Of the latter, it seems remarkable that he did not receive the commission for which he applied. Many would agree with the judgement, "he was the greatest rock climber England has yet produced". The former's library of mountaineering books was offered for sale on p79. One wonders where these particular books now reside. The issue ends with an apology from the Editor (p77) for the delay in the production of the Journal, "In these days of common stress, one need not indicate the cause". His wife adds, "at this point my husband has completely broken down".

The obituaries continue in N11, nine in all, including Laurence Slingsby (p145), (youngest son of Cecil Slingsby), Jeffcoat (p152) and Claude Worthington (p156). The portraits of smart young men, hardly older than boys, in uniform are almost too much to bear. Normal life is represented in a short note (p117) by George Bower (G.S.B), on ropes and belays, in which the beginnings of the ideas on dynamic energy absorption are enunciated, "The correct method is for the second to belay himself to the rocks with his own end of the leader's rope, and to pass the latter over his shoulder, controlling it with his two hands. The shock of the leader's fall is then taken up gradually, by the friction of the rope over the body of his companion, and, only when all the slack has thus been taken up does the strain come rigidly on the rock belay". In *Victory—and the Future*, p159, William Palmer enters a debate about what the role of climbing clubs should be in introducing and training the many novices who were expected to enter the sport after the war.

Major E B Lees is recorded on p234 of N12 (1918) to be the last member of the Club known to have fallen in action. The debate about a suitable war memorial is engaged by the Editor (p229), in response to a letter from T C Ormiston-Chant (p257) in which he proposes the publication of special *Pocket*

*Editions*, "giving useful information for all parts of the Lake District". George Abraham gives insight to Edward Whymper in *Recollections of a Great Mountaineer and his Mountains*, (p167). If you have come across mention of the fox-hound Charmer's grave (perhaps in Wainwright, the Southern Fells) on the slopes of the Old Man, you will be interested to read the events described in *Charmer 1911*, p 221.

The *Roll of Honour* ("Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori") containing 19 names of the fallen is given on p98 of N13, about 28% of the members recorded as taking part in the war on the previous pages. An account is given of the lighting of a beacon, to mark *Peace Day*, on the summit of Scafell Pike (p 14), illustrated by interesting photographs. G M Trevelyan contributes a commentary on six photographs of the high-alpine warfare in Italy, p3. *New Climbs in Wasdale*, by Holland, p38, represents a welcome return to rock climbing matters. The Editor, Chorley, writes of the defeat of a plan to construct a motor road over *Styhead Pass*, p60. The beginning of a London section of the Club can be found on p108.

Fred Botterill's passing is marked with an obituary on p221 of N14, as is that of Canon Rawnsley (p223), a Friend of the Lake District before this was an official designation. A letter from George Scatree, *The Club's War Memorial*, p 213, mentions for the first time in the Journal the possibility of purchasing part of Great Gable. Ashley Abraham records in *Lake District Fell Walking*, some marathon fell walking rounds, culminating in Eustace Thomas' record made on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1920 (at the age of 51!). On a personal note, Dorothy Pilley's short eulogy, *Rain in the Mountains*, p172, represents my only real link with the personalities of this era. Dorothy and her husband I A Richards were the landlords of a climbing friend of mine in Cambridge during the 1970s. After one particularly and interesting long discussion with her about mountaineering, she gave me one of the fill-in issues I needed to complete my set of FRCC journals from a huge collection of mountaineering literature stored in her garage.

N15 marks the beginnings of the activities of the post-war generation. *More New Climbs Around Wasdale*, (p241), was the first of many contributions by H M Kelly. The past is recalled by Haskett Smith in *Wasdale Forty Years Ago*, p301. Both past and future are the subject of *Mardale*, by Isaac Hinchcliffe, a Manchester City Councillor. Pictures of Mardale Head, the Church and The Dun Bull record the scene before the flooding of the valley for Manchester's water supply. It is fitting to end by mentioning two articles on CB: *The Great Central Buttress of Scafell*, CF Holland, p274 and *Scafell Central Buttress*, p 284, by Bentley Beetham. The former account of the first ascent has become a classic of mountaineering literature and in many ways marks the end of the era represented by the first 15 issues of the

FRCC Journal. Holland states his article was "*mainly written as a panegyric of Herford*", of whom he writes, "*He will live in my memory as the finest and bravest man I have ever known*".



Selections from the

**Fell & Rock Journal**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Series, Vol. VII, No. 1

2105

## AROUND THE HUTS

### **Raw Head**

The restoration work is nearly complete. We are confident that the hut will be ready for use in time for the Bicentenary celebrations, and hope that members understand that there has been no indiligence on the part of officers. The devastation caused in Langdale by the storms of 2101 was very great. All professional endeavours in the dale were, quite properly, devoted to the restoration of buildings needed for the resumption of food production. So Raw Head has been rebuilt almost entirely by members who have applied their skills, and their public holidays and annual leave, to the work. We are grateful for members' generous gifts of hard and soft furnishings to replace those ruined in the collapse. *K.B.L.*

### **Beetham Cottage**

Thanks again to Arthur Trumble. Two years ago he designed and made the water turbine that powers the electric light at Brackenclose. Now he's made another for Beetham Cottage. Candles in a naughty world! *A.N.*

### **Brackenclose**

We're halfway through the ten-year plan for replanting Brackenclose Wood. Thanks to Joe Withershins and his volunteers for all their work. *B. B-M.*

### **Birkness**

The AGA range installed at the maintenance meet this year is proving popular, it gives hot water as well as improved cooking facilities. Work is in progress on loose boxes for four in the stables. Straw and feed will be kept in the old coach house. *J.K.R.*



I called the builders back yet again to rectify their work on Karn House chimney. It's a lot to expect of a 20<sup>th</sup> Century all-electric house to convert it to solid fuel, but this saga's been going on for nearly fifty years. West Highland Constabulary say they still can't see their way to releasing Waters Cottage. I suppose the rent comes in handy for the huts fund, but we could do with easy access to the Ben. *S. McL.*

### The Salving House

There is now secure cycle storage in a building in the old car park. This should put an end to the thefts members have endured in recent years. Sorry there is no room for stabling. *B.S.*

## CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

**J. Honeywell**

This year has seen the great leap forward of the first modern ascent of *Eagle's Nest Ridge Direct* on the Napes. This follows the iconic first modern ascent of the *Needle*, described in the 2089 Journal, which marked the resurgence of the Fell & Rock as a Climbing Club. The first modern ascent of Slab and Notch, on Pillar, in 2086 was inadequately recorded in the first issue of the Journal 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, so the route is described below.

### GREAT GABLE

The Napes

**Eagle's Nest Ridge Direct** 36 metres. Very Severe and exposed.

Leader needs 24 metres of rope. This climb is on the steep arête to the left of the Needle.

First ascent, 15<sup>th</sup> April 1892. G. A. Solly, W. C. Slingsby, G. P. Baker, W. A. Brigg.

First modern ascent, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2105. S.A.G., N. A. McR, using modern hemp rope and antique alloy karabiners from the FRCC archive collection. Stockinged feet.

- (1) 15 metres. Steep rocks with good holds are climbed bearing right to a ledge overlooking the Dress Circle. Belay known as the Piton.
- (2) 21 metres. Traverse left to the edge of the arête using two parallel cracks en route. A few feet higher a small platform (the Eagle's Nest) is reached. Small intermediate belay. Continue for 5 metres to a second platform (Crow's Nest). Delicate moves on sloping holds are made

from the platform onto the slab above to a junction with the Eagle's Nest Ordinary Route (see 2099 Journal).

## PILLAR

### East Face of High Man

**Slab and Notch Climb** 38 metres. Easy. Leader needs 20 metres of rope. Starts opposite the point where the Shamrock Traverse enters East Jordan Gully. First ascent, 14<sup>th</sup> August 1863. J. W. E. Conybearc, A. J. Butler, E. Leeke, J. C. Leake, T. R. C. Campbell, J. D. Poycr, J. W. Pratt.

First modern ascent 4 April 2086. H.J., R. T. B. Edgbaston, W. W. B., using modern hemp rope. Boots with hobs.

- 1) 14 metres. A horizontal 'path' followed by a couple of four-foot rises leads across the foot of the Slab to a corner below the Notch. The path is reached either by climbing a three metre crack on the right, or by scrambling up on the left and working down the slab.
- (2) A corner with good holds finishes at the Notch.
- (3) An easy ledge to the right, followed by an easy staircase.
- (4) Another ledge and staircase.
- (5) A short slab with a traverse to the right finishes in a grassy gully. The latter goes to High Man.

## THE YEAR WITH THE CLUB

The Annual Dinner 2104 was held on the first weekend of November at Keswick Town Hall. 133 members and guests sat down to a sumptuous meal provided and cooked, as usual, by members. Dora Tyson's contribution of a red deer buck, shot, hung and butchered by herself was welcomed with acclaim. The principal guest was Llewellyn ap Rhys, President of the Climbers' Club, who spoke at length in favour of ever closer mutual support between the clubs, then made comical mischief by raising the ghost of A. B. Hargreaves and *More of Arfon*.

A hard frost on Saturday night burnt off early, to permit good climbing on Shepherd's Crag on Sunday morning. Walking parties went variously up Langstrath onto Allen Crag, Glaramara, and / or Scafell Pike, and over Cat Bells and High Spy, all in brilliant sunshine.

The only complaints to be heard were that the AGM had lasted all of seventy five minutes because of the extra business occasioned by the impending Bicentenary.

At Christmas and New Year, huge falls of fresh snow in the Cairngorms limited club activity at Karn House to partying by members who had managed to get there. In the Lake District there were blue skies and ample snow in beautiful condition. Members at the Salving House managed to rustle up enough ice-axes for a mass ascent of Central Gully on Great End. Man of the match, so to speak, was Phil Willis's dog Ferdinand, secured by a complicated rope harness which he did not seem to need.

For the Easter Meet at the Salving House the snow had cleared. Climbing in Gillercombe was cold to the hands but very enjoyable in the sunshine. Walkers spread themselves over the landscape from Langstrath. On Saturday night there was an impromptu reversion to a very ancient practice dating back to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: a singsong round the fire. What devotion in Liza Peckett to have hauled her guitar as well as her gear all the way from Windermere station on her bicycle.

Whitsun at Brackenclose was a washout, as was the London Section's meet at Bectham Cottage. The climate nowadays is perhaps less extreme than it was in the middle of the last century, but it must be assumed that torrential conditions will occur for some decades to come.

The Vice-Presidents' meet at Birkness, on the traditional first weekend of July, enjoyed (if that is the right term) scorching heat (34 degrees) with electrical storms overnight. Climbers restricted themselves to the easier routes in Birkness Combe. Some hardy spirits walked over Haystacks or Grasmoor. Boating and bathing were in vogue.

The Committee has decided not to reintroduce a *Chronicle* or newsletter at the moment, though one is not ruled out for the future. Our volunteer typesetters and printer already sacrifice enough of their climbing time to making the Journal possible. The cost of professional printing and distribution for a newsletter is prohibitive.

The vexed question of whether to allow the membership to rise above the statutory 300 (Rule 7) is again under consideration. Admission of another 50 members, in response to pressing demand, would bring the proportion of members to the general population roughly in line with that in 2006, which remained steady until the suppression of rock climbing in 2035. The President would welcome members' views.

Bicentenary: Please read and act upon the supplement which accompanies this issue of the Journal. Note that 31 March 2106 is the opening date for applications for tickets.

K. R. O'H

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Well, here we are with a new volume of the Journal and a new editor, and the Bicentenary staring us in the face. And you're not going to get a newsletter, either. As Kevin tells you elsewhere, we can't justify the cost or the (unpaid) labour. Anyway, what do you want to know that won't wait until the Journal comes out? My grandad used to frighten me, when I was a kid, with tales about information overload.

Electrical impulses from a worldwide monster used to flood into people's brains, through their cars and their eyes. Piles of paper used to come in through their doors (I could never understand how; didn't they shut them?) shouting for attention (How? Paper shouting? Weird!). He said they were so busy processing the information, they couldn't do anything else. They processed while they were eating. They had insomnia and processed while they were lying awake. A lot of them were so busy processing, they didn't get round to procreating, which my dad said was just as well. The population had got overloaded, and this helped to get it down. So unless you want to go back to those days, mind how you nag for a newsletter.

Which brings me to the new editor. That's me. Don't expect anything new. I'm going to follow the customs of the Second Series as near as I can. Don't expect sublime prose; I'm just a joiner and cabinet-maker who can spell. But I hope you'll help me out. Send me plenty of copy (best handwriting, please, on alternate lines, on coronet size 210mm x 250 mm). And please, please don't be put off if I have to turn some of your stuff down. We've only so much space, and someone has to choose, and that's me. If you'd like to send some drawings for the Bicentenary number, I'll try my hand at making woodcuts for the Journal — or send your own woodcuts if you know the technique. Half or quarter coronet size, please. We might be able to print, say, six.

Climbers, please help Jim with recording climbs. Take the trouble to write up the hut Climbing Log when you do a first re-ascent, or if (come the day!) you make a new route. We're only twenty years into the Renaissance. We're using modern hemp rope and blacksmith-made metal. We're reliving the history of rock climbing. The sort of routes we are fit to climb are getting on for 200 years old. There was nothing climbed for 31 years, or, if there was, it wasn't recorded. The old Journals and guide books that didn't get confiscated in the climbing ban suffered while they were in hiding. They're not easy to come by, and anyway, things have changed since they were written, so it's really important to have proper modern records. I'll print them when Jim sends them to me, but he can't send what he hasn't got, so it's up to you.

# BAILLY'S "CUMBERLAND" ROPE

Specially Made  
for Rock Climbers.  
Approved by the  
Fell & Rock C.C.

Finest  
English  
Hemp



Marine and other cordage  
for all purposes  
supplied from stock  
or to order

James Bailly and Niece  
The Rope Walk Maryport

A note about gear. The Committee recommend that modern hemp rope (preferably Bailly's "Cumberland") should be used in climbing, in spite of shortcomings. The point is that no plastic monofilament climbing rope was made after 2035. Any that was hidden on account of the Climbing Ban is at least 70 years old. Some has shown up very well in tests, a lot better than new hemp, but some is deadly and you can't tell by looking at it. Monofilament was manufactured up until the industrial collapse in the 2040s, but it's still going to be at least 50 years old and it might have been made for anything – boat rigging if you're lucky, farm yard stuff if you're not. Best have nothing to do with it.

Metal's a bit different. Previously unused alloy karabiners and artificial chocks manufactured up to 120 years ago, especially by Cassin, Clog, and Camp, have performed a lot better than the best modern steel ones. If you've inherited some still in the original packaging, unopened, you can use them with confidence. If they've been opened, you take your chance. Look for signs of abrasion (suggesting they've taken shocks) and for corrosion. Look especially for corrosion in 20<sup>th</sup> Century cam devices called "Friends" and any others that have steel parts in with the alloy. Otherwise, our own member Arthur Wallace makes reliable steel karabiners and wrought iron chocks. He also fits new shafts (wooden or metal, according to type) to antique ice-axes. Arthur says he's not managed to forge steel hard enough and sharp enough to make satisfactory axe heads, but he keeps trying.

Which brings us back to the Committee. They ask, if you use a club ice-axe please make sure you return it to its place in the hut in good condition (undamaged, dry, lightly oiled). If it has held a fall, particularly if it's a wooden-shafted one, report it to the warden without fail. There are no more axes being made, yet. We can't afford to lose any.

And finally, as they say: there's word of rock climbing boots with outer soles cut from bicycle tyres. A member who shall be nameless has tried them, and she says they are marvellous. She thinks they must be rather like the "vibram" soles our grandparents used to have. **But** there's no modern glue that can bond them onto leather, so they're only stitched on, and the stitches are on the edges, and the stitches can easily wear through. And the tyres must be black market. No reputable – and that means legal – dealer supplies a tyre without a worn one being handed in. So be wary, be very wary, if you're offered anything said to be a modern vibram.

*Happy days, and good climbing.*

## MEMORIES OF THE FELLFARING CLUB OF THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT

*Alma Robertson Begum*

The old name reverted to the even older name of Fell & Rock Climbing Club of the English Lake District in 2086 when a new Government, realising its utter dependence on the ancient county administrations, removed from the Statute Book many outdated and oppressive regulations, including the bans on rock climbing and fox hunting. Cumberland, Westmorland, and Lancashire agreed that the former was part of their heritage and the latter was necessary for protection of essential livestock, and that both should be encouraged. I well remember how my father, then in his 91<sup>st</sup> year, rejoiced, even though he was no longer active enough to walk on the fells, much less climb rocks. He was so delighted that the club had survived through catastrophic times to enable others once more to enjoy the pastime that had given him so much pleasure in his younger days.

I myself never had the opportunity to climb rocks in any significant way for I was only sixteen when the ban became law. I had scrambled about on easy rocks with my parents' ropes from above, but they had put no pressure on me to do more, believing that I ought to make my own choice in my own time. So the opportunity never came. Still, I do remember the sensuous pleasure of sticky-boots on warm, dry rock, and the wonderful, almost silky, sensation of kernmantel rope snaking sinuously through one's fingers. It was beautiful rope, in the most amazing speckled colours, quite unlike the heavy, hairy, drab, and kinky modern rope shown to me by our young climbers. Moreover, it was quite unaffected by water.

There were miraculously lightweight karabiners, too, made from alloys of, I think, a metal called aluminium, which is no longer smelted. There were artificial "chockstones" also made of alloy, threaded with enormously strong loops of flexible wire "cord", and ingenious devices called "friends" which adapted themselves to fit in the most unpromising cracks in the rock. My grandsons Ali and Gilbert have inherited all their great grandfather's bits and pieces of that kind, lucky boys!

I think the great energy crisis that occurred in the middle of the last century had been foreseen, but it developed far more rapidly than perhaps anybody expected. You see, people all over the world – and there were five or six times more of them then than there are now – were consuming energy ever more prodigally. It seems inconceivable today, but railway trains ran at 450 kph. On the great motorway roads, now derelict, millions of privately-owned vehicles each holding anything from two to eight persons ran at 110

**A. Wallace  
Blacksmith and  
Farrier**

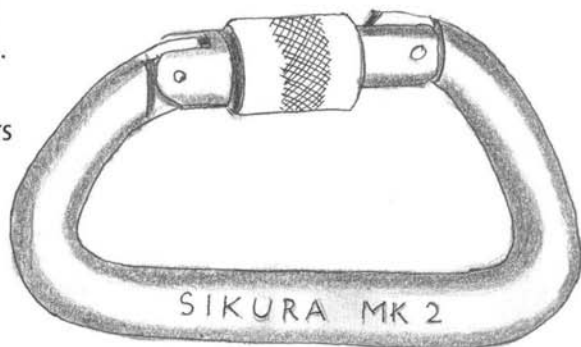
**The Sikura Karabiner**

and other security aids for climbers  
made on the premises to the highest  
standards. Finest forged steel.

Antique ice-axes restored  
and re-shafted with  
selected English ash.

Hob nails and clinkers  
always in stock.

The Smithy,  
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– 120 kph, though if there were too many of them all at once, they could spend hours moving at less than walking pace. Since the mid fifties none of them have been manufactured. So many machines, moving at such fantastically high speeds, and in all countries, consumed more resources than the earth could possibly provide.

Then there were the aeroplanes, the flying machines, each of which carried hundreds of people at 800 or even 1000 kph over tens of thousands of kilometres. The only way to make them rise into the air was to burn refined mineral oil, which they used many times more extravagantly than the other means of transport, and their tonnes of waste products, deposited in the upper air at 10,000 metres, did much to bring on the climatic instability of the 2050s and 60s. They flew to and from unpleasantly noisy and hostile-seeming airports and were themselves disgustingly crowded. I was not sorry to see the end of them, though it meant I could no longer travel to foreign places.

It could not last, and of course it did not. In this country we were, I think, more fortunate and more far-sighted than most. I can remember as a little girl listening to visiting academics exchanging views with my parents on the likely effects of the naturally shrinking population and the reluctance of people from other countries to come to live and work here. You see, even in the 2030s, Governments here were taking stricter measures than almost any but the Scandinavian countries to reduce consumption of energy and to make the United Kingdom less dependent on imported food and manufactured goods. It was perceived as a rather dismal and puritanical place, and perhaps it was. After all, rock climbing did not use any more energy or materials than any other holiday activity, but it was forbidden in 2035 as an unwarranted risk to health and safety. Nevertheless, the country was moving towards the economical, easy-paced, self-sufficient way of life which we now enjoy. When the Great War in the Pacific came in 2070 we were well able to withstand the privations it caused, which devastated so many other countries. We were used to doing without electricity except for the most necessary purposes, which did not include the profligate electronic communication so common when I was growing up. We were used to stream trains, fuelled by biomass, travelling at 50 kph; to bicycles manufactured in small, local workshops; to walking; to heating our houses with sustainable local fuels. We were accustomed to using home grown wool, flax, and leather, and to artefacts forged or fashioned in local workshops. We found we did not miss the large-scale manufactures of the old days.

This was all less luxurious than I had been used to, but it was comfort and prosperity compared to what was available in the rest of the world. I like to think that we were duly grateful. We were certainly quite cheerful; increasingly so when the seasons were once again distinguishable, as they had been in my grandparents' time. The club, of course, was a great blessing for those

fortunate enough to achieve membership. The huts, which were invaluable bases from which to walk on the hills, were more easily convertible to modern, thrifty living than were many people's homes. I do remember how tired my husband Jacobus and I were, the first time we travelled from Bolton to Brackenclose by bicycle, but we got used to it, you know. Members with lots of money would travel with their bicycles by train to Seascale and pedal, as it seemed in a superior sort of way, to Wasdale Head. For us Lancashire people, Scotland had to be reserved for our principal holidays; but we could cycle to and from Aviemore in four days with three bivouacs each way on the unused motorways. I think only supermen could do that on the modern macadam roads.

I suppose fell walking is much the same as it always was. There was an unpleasant time, just when I was of an age to make the most of it, when walking alone on the fells was forbidden, as well as climbing. I must confess to having broken the law now and then. Erica Lindstrom and I used to register ourselves as going for a round walk then, when we were out of sight, we would go off in separate directions, cross at the half way point, and reunite at our starting point. When I met Jacobus, solitary walking rather lost its attractions.

At first there were plenty of members who had done the most remarkable climbs in the European Alps and in ranges like the Himalaya and the Andes. When we sat round the fire in the huts in the evenings they used to exchange stories of their adventures, with hardly ever a hint of boastfulness. Nelly Kidd was particularly reticent, as was Gervaise Langfeld. They had to be tactfully drawn out – Gervaise usually with whisky – before they would let out details of knife-edge arêtes negotiated, great walls scaled, or avalanche traps circumvented. How strongly they went over the fells, even when past their prime, and how kind and encouraging they were to new and less powerful members. Eventually, of course, none of them were left, but their influence has lingered long enough to inspire our young tigers with the spirit of the club. They, in their turn, are unfailingly kind and patient with old people like me, who love the hills and the club, even though we never had the chance to make the most of either of them.

I wonder what the next century will bring; something different from our first and second centuries, that is for sure. Surely there cannot be another war; the waste would be unbearable. A climate with too many blue skies would hardly do, dependent as Britain is upon water power for its workshops, but a moderate climate that gave us good snow in winter and long, warm, dry summer days would be a great encouragement to people who love the hills. May our successors be blessed with all that, and continue the Fell & Rock's long tradition of happy mountaineering.

## A HISTORY OF LAKE DISTRICT CLIMBING GUIDEBOOKS

by

Stephen Reid  
(FRCC Guidebooks Editor)

Some years ago I compiled a list of all the Lake District Climbing Guides for which I had been able to find details. The list as it then existed was published in the FRCC Chronicle and prompted a few members to mention some of the more obscure guides that they possessed and which I had overlooked, all of which have now been included below. In the article that follows I have been fairly strict as to what constitutes a guidebook which I have defined as a "book or pamphlet containing descriptions of climbs". This rules out narrative books such as Oppenheimer's *The Heart of Lakeland*, despite the account of climbs therein. Many of the Abraham's books contain material on Lakeland climbs but, with the exception of *British Mountain Climbs*, these are also more in the nature of accounts rather than descriptions. Many other books fall into this category and have been excluded along with the few more general books that have appeared over the years that might best be described as crag guides rather than climbing guides. Climbing guides to Lancashire that also include South Lakes limestone crags such as Chapel Head have also been excluded, on the somewhat flimsy grounds that until very recently no-one considered them part of Lake District climbing. Scrambling guides are likewise omitted. Finally, I have not included any of the many climbing magazines, such as *Rocksport* and the short lived *Rock Action*, which often included full descriptions of new routes in the Lake District, happily leaving this task to someone of a more diligent nature than myself.

The final list below is probably still incomplete but I hope that it will prove of interest to others and provide the basis for a definitive record. I would be pleased to learn of any errors or omissions.

### FELL AND ROCK CLIMBING CLUB

The Fell & Rock came late into guidebook publishing, and, but for the First World War, might never have started at all. The Climbers' Club first guidebook, *Lliwedd* by Thompson and Andrews, had been published in 1909 and Siegfried Herford had been asked by Geoffrey Winthrop Young to undertake

the first of a series of Lakeland guides for the CC – Scafell. It was during the course of preliminary work for this that Central Buttress was climbed and the results of Herford's explorations, undertaken with Sansom, Holland, Gibson and others, were published in the FRCC Journal of 1914. Herford was killed in action in 1916, but Holland later incorporated his descriptions into the first FRCC Scafell Guide.

However the notion that the FRCC should be involved in some way in the recording of Lakeland climbs had occurred within a few years of the Club's foundation. In 1908, Edward Scantlebury, then Club Secretary and Journal Editor, proposed that a committee be formed to draw up an up to date graded list of climbs in the style of Owen Glynn Jones whose *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District* had been published in 1897. Indeed, a committee consisting of Ashley and George Abraham, Fred Botterill, George Woodhouse and Lehmann Oppenheimer was formed for the task, but the idea was shelved for unspecified reasons later the same year. In 1909, George Seatree, then President, again raised the issue. He suggested that "in the near future, it would be most probable that small handbooks for climbers concerning climbs in the Lake District would be published," and that he considered it "most fitting for our club to be the one to publish such." Considerable discussion took place on whether the guide should take the form of one or several volumes. It was decided that in any case Scantlebury should set about recruiting teams of at least three writers for each area, but that enquiry should also be made into other climbing guides to the Lake District by private writers that were already in progress. In October that year the guidebook project was abandoned as it was felt that the "books by George Abraham and Fred Botterill would meet the requirements of the case." What became of Botterill's work is uncertain but George Abraham's *British Mountain Climbs*, a pocket guidebook covering climbs in the Lake District, Snowdonia and Scotland, appeared the same year and was well received. Taking Jones's and Abraham's books into account, together with the CC's intentions, and the devastation of the War and its aftermath, it becomes easier to understand why the FRCC's first guidebook, *Doe Crag* by George Bower, did not appear until 1922.

Prior to this though, much information on new and existing climbs had already been published in the Fell and Rock Journals, beginning with Volume 1, Number 1 (1907), which contained, amongst other things, articles with route descriptions and photo-diagrams on Gimmer Crag, Scafell Pinnacle and Pavey Ark. This tradition continues to the present day, though, in recent years, full route descriptions have generally been left to the FRCC's biannual Recent Developments supplements. More recently still, these have been superseded by the Club's website ([www.frcc.co.uk](http://www.frcc.co.uk)) which lists all new routes recorded since the last published guidebook to each area.

It seems likely that when this first FRCC series of guides was finally published, it was as a direct result of a letter by Clem Ormiston-Chant printed in the FRCC Journal of 1918. He suggested that a series of six volumes to Lakeland climbing and walking be produced by the Club as a perpetual memorial to its members who had been killed in the Great War. The letter laid out to the last detail what the cover, illustrations and contents of each guide should consist of, and exactly how they should be produced.

The eventual "First Series" of five guides was it has to be said slightly less ambitious, but the idea was taken up by the 1921 Committee (of which Ormiston-Chant was Vice-President) with the initial intention of publishing the guide in installments in the Journal. Thus RST (Theo) Chorley, Journal Editor from 1918-1927, became the first *de facto* Guidebook Editor by default. Bower was detailed to write up *Doe Crag*, and Cecil "Charlie" Holland and George Sansom were to undertake *Scawfell* (Sansom eventually dropped out). By the following year however, it had been resolved to publish the guides separately from the journal (in the event they were simultaneously printed in the journals, which remain a cheap form of acquiring them for those who balk at the price these scarce early guides now command), and the Barrow Printing Company quoted for the job.



Photo: Theo Chorley in 1923.

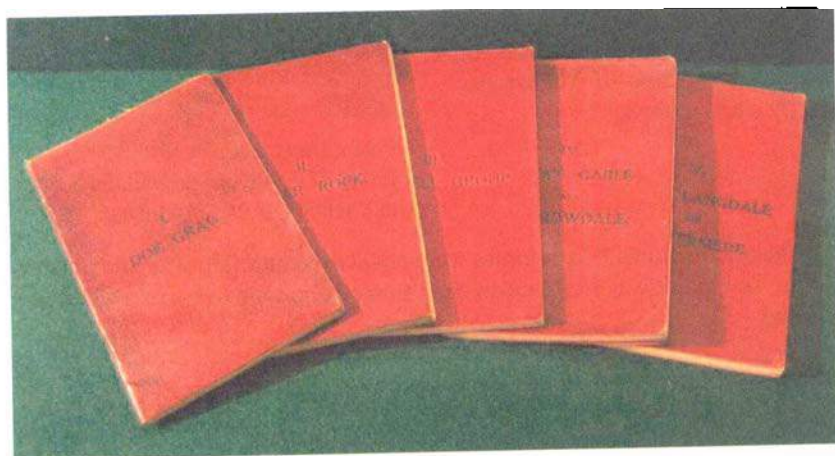
The cost was to be no more than 10d, to retail at 2/0d, including a cover of "Crimson Basil Cloth at 3/1d per yard" which was to become infamous for leaking red dye when wet.

The guides themselves are wonderful affairs containing some remarkable photographs and excellent and often hilarious descriptions. The first issue, George Bower's *Doe Crag*, contrasts nicely in style with the second, Harry Kelly's *Pillar Rock*. Compare for instance the following excerpts:

**Intermediate Gully** – Severe; strenuous; 80 foot rope. There are members of the Club to whom "Intermediate" is more than a climb; rather is its ascent one of the solemn rites connected with the practice of a cult. To one such disciple did I write, asking for a description of the preparations necessary to attain to this *cercle*. The reply came by wire: "Train on Raw meat and Stout, use Bulldog buttons . . ."

This before one even starts the description, which is also highly amusing, is Bower's style throughout: whilst the lines below, a model of terse brevity, are from Kelly's description of *New West Climb*.

- (1) 20 feet. Easy rocks trending slightly to the left.
  - (2) 25 feet. A rib leading to a small grassy corner.
  - (3) 25 feet. A steep staircase finishing on a good earth ledge.
  - (4) 20 feet. A wide shallow chimney leading to a small platform.
  - (5) 15 feet. A short traverse to the left to a good belay.
  - (6) 35 feet. A fairly difficult groove.
- etc. . . .



The "Red" Guides of the 1<sup>st</sup> Series.

1st Series	Maroon Covers, simultaneously printed in FRCC Journals		
	TITLE	AUTHOR	EDITOR
I. Doe Crag	GS Bower	RST Chorley	1922
II. Pillar Rock	HM Kelly	RST Chorley	1923
III. Scawfell Group	CF Holland	RST Chorley	1924
IV. Great Gable and Borrowdale	HS Gross & AR Thomson	RST Chorley	1925
V. Great Langdale and Buttermere	G Basterfield & AR Thomson	RST Chorley	1926

A decade on from the "Red Guides", the guidebooks assumed a more compact shape which has been retained to the present day. They also acquired a stiff hardwearing buff cover and, in place of photo-diagrams, a series of exquisite crag diagrams and illustrations by William Heaton-Cooper. With their contrasting red and black title pages and neat uncluttered design, they remain some of the most stylishly attractive guides ever published and, like many FRCC publications to follow, they were printed by the Cloister Press of Manchester – Kelly's home town.



Photo: Harry Kelly in 1922. He was Editor of the FRCC guides for a quarter of a century. (FRCC Archive)

That the previous five volumes were condensed into four was probably due to the fact that it was Kelly rather than Bower who took over from Chorley as editor!

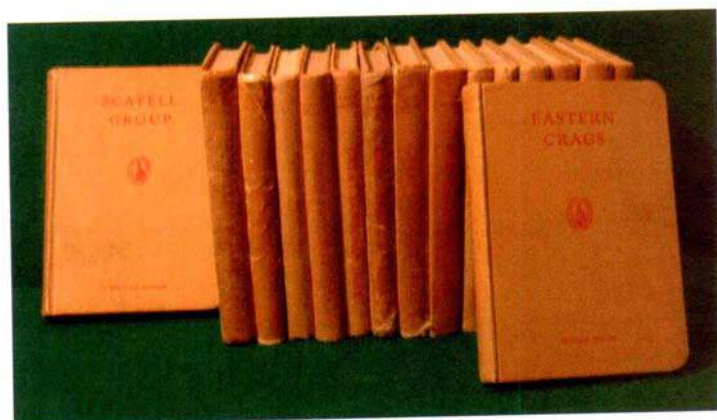


The 2<sup>nd</sup> Series, with Volume 4 angled so as to show its numbered spine.

The red volume is a presentation copy containing all four books. These seem to have mainly been bound for use in FRCC huts, but were also given to various deserving people – Sid Cross had a set for instance.

2nd Series	Buff Guides, Hardback, Numbered on Spine		
TITLE	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
1. Pillar Rock and Neighbourhood	HM Kelly	HM Kelly	1935
2. Scafell Group	AT Hargreaves	HM Kelly	1936
3. Great Gable, Borrowdale, Buttermere	CJ Astley-Cooper, E Wood-Johnson, & LH Pollitt	HM Kelly	1937
4. Dow Crag, Great Langdale, Outlying Crags	AT Hargreaves, SH Cross, William Clegg, E Wood-Johnson & CJ Astley Cooper	HM Kelly	1938
The above four guides were also bound as one in a red cover for use in FRCC Huts and as presentation copies.			

Following on from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Series came a long series of guides almost identical in format but lacking the number in front of the title. Confusingly these were subtitled "Second Series" when they were in fact the third. Kelly remained as editor and Heaton Cooper the illustrator.



The sixteen volumes, including reprints, that make up the 3<sup>rd</sup> Series, spanned almost twenty years.



3rd Series	Buff Guides (labeled "Second Series")		
TITLE	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Great Gable, Green Gable, Kirkfell, Yewbarrow, Buckbarrow	CJ Astley Cooper, W Peascod & AP Rossiter	HM Kelly	1948
Buttermere and Newlands Area	W Peascod and G Rushworth	HM Kelly	1949
Great Langdale	William Clegg, AR Dolphin & JW Cook	HM Kelly	1950
Pillar Rock and Neighbourhood	HM Kelly & W Peascod	HM Kelly	1952
Borrowdale	Bentley Beetham	HM Kelly	1953
Great Langdale	Reprint of 1950		1954
Scafell Group	AT Hargreaves, AR Dolphin & R Miller	HM Kelly	1956
Great Langdale	Reprint of 1950/54		1956
Dow Crag and Other Climbs	AT Hargreaves, SH Cross – also attributed to William Clegg, E Wood-Johnson & CJ Astley Cooper. A supplement of new routes in all areas is unattributed but according to the FRCC handbook was compiled by AF Brooks.	HM Kelly	1957
Great Langdale	Reprint of 1950/54/56		1958
Great Gable, Green Gable, Kirkfell, Yewbarrow, Buckbarrow	Reprint of 1948		1958
Eastern Crags	Harold Drasdo. A supplement of further new routes in all areas is unattributed.	HM Kelly	1959
Borrowdale	Reprint of 1953		1960
Great Langdale	Reprint of 1950/54/56/58		1961
Great Gable, Green Gable, Kirkfell, Yewbarrow, Buckbarrow	Reprint of 1948/58		1961
Borrowdale	Reprint of 1953/1960		1966
These eight guides were also bound together in sets of three volumes in hardback red covers for use in FRCC Huts and as presentation copies.			



Photo: William Heaton Cooper  
diagram artist for the FRCC guides  
from 1935 – 1980. (FRCC Archive)

were changing hands for three times their retail price), and culminated in Borrowdale's leading climber of the day, Paul Ross (an FRCC member), getting together with Mike Thompson to produce (in the short time of six weeks) their own private guide to Borrowdale. The FRCC's response of a straight reprint of the '53 guide, containing none of the new routes that Ross and his friends had pioneered in the preceding decade was totally inadequate and Kelly stepped down as editor – though not without a battle with Allan Austin over what should and should not be included in the forthcoming Langdale guide. For a few years Joe Griffin took over but, having almost completed the Langdale

By the late '60s, Kelly had been editor for over thirty years. During this time he commanded tremendous respect in the climbing world, both as a climber with first ascents of many hard new Lake District routes, and as an editor and guidebook writer who set the standards for British climbing guides that are still followed today. However, the guides that must have initially seemed so exciting in format had hardly changed during that time and were viewed by some leading climbers as moribund, an opinion that was only reinforced by Kelly's refusal to introduce grades above VS. Worse, new volumes were increasingly slow to appear and old ones often unavailable. This was particularly true in Borrowdale where by 1966 the existing guide was 13 years old and had been out of print for 3 years (existing copies

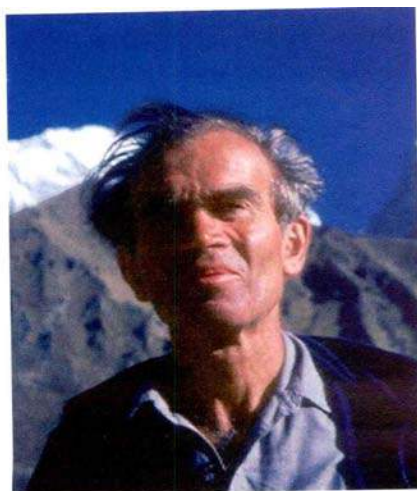


Photo: Joe Griffin ca 1970. (Wilkinson Collection)

and Scafell guides, the latter of which he had also co-written, he found the workload overwhelming, and the refusal of the Committee to modernize the grading system frustrating: he handed over to John Wilkinson.

The change in editor saw a pronounced change in the appearance of the guides with the introduction of waterproof plastic covers – Wilkinson had tested one of these by throwing it repeatedly at a wall for over an hour! Each area was also assigned its own different coloured cover and spine designed by FRCC member Gordon Dyke who was at that time Art Master at Kirkby Stephen School: the colours still prevail today. Maps of the areas covered were included as end-papers, a more modern type-face was chosen, and most importantly HVS, and later, XS grades were introduced. This new “Fourth Series” was also characterised by somewhat stark black on white block titles. Apart from that the guides were almost identical in format and style to those of Kelly’s editorship. Heaton Cooper remained the illustrator and what the guides may have lacked in outward appeal, they certainly made up for inwardly by the inclusion of his superb coloured frontispieces. What was most remarkable though was the sheer volume of material published in such a short space of time – eight new guides and one reprint (with addendum) within four years. Wilkinson later equated the editing of the 4<sup>th</sup> Series as equivalent to 9 months full time work. Astonishingly he also found time to become Vice-President, and then President, of the FRCC during this period. Even more astoundingly three of the guides he produced were done whilst he was working in Nigeria! In 1969, after the *Eastern Crags* guide appeared, the magazine *Rocksport* commented “the FRCC give the impression of having perfected an efficient and effective guidebook ‘machine’, capable of producing guidebooks almost ‘at the turn of a handle’”.

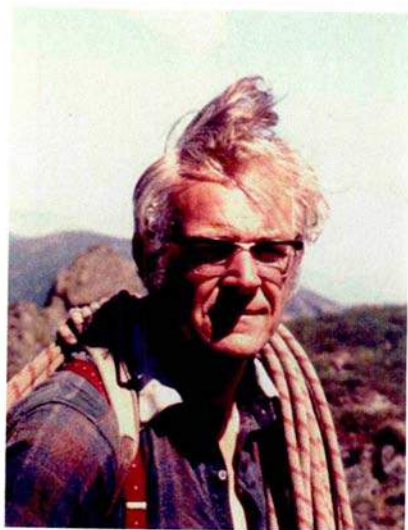


Photo: John Wilkinson ca 1970. His output of guides over a decade was extraordinary. (Wilkinson Collection)

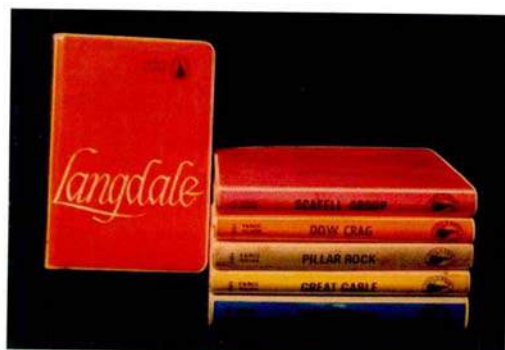


The 4th Series saw a drastic change in cover, and the introduction of colours for areas.

The two date variations for Scafell, and colour variations for Dow are included here.

4th Series	Plastic Cover, Block Title, Date on Spine			
TITLE	COVER	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Eastern Crag	(green)	H Drasdo. This was a reprint of the 1959 edition (edited by Kelly) with a supplement by NJ Soper. It was really an interim bridging publication, and there is no date on the spine.	J Wilkinson	1967
Great Langdale	(red)	JA Austin	J Wilkinson	1967
Scafell Group	(purple)	G Oliver & LJ Griffin	J Wilkinson	1967
The above guide also exists with the date 1969 on the spine and some slight differences to the cover, though in all other respects it is identical. It is dated 1967 inside. This was a misprint on a batch of covers that were printed after the guide.				
Dow Crag Area	(orange)	D Miller.	J Wilkinson	1968
This guide is often seen with a yellow cover but this is thought to be merely a faded version of the original "Air-Sea Rescue Orange".				
Borrowdale	(blue)	PJ Nunn and O Woolcock	J Wilkinson	1968
Pillar Group	(grey)	AG Cram	J Wilkinson	1968
Great Gable	(yellow)	PL Fearnough	J Wilkinson	1969
Eastern Crag	(green)	H Drasdo and NJ Soper	J Wilkinson	1969
Buttormere and Newlands	(dark blue)	NJ Soper and N Allinson	J Wilkinson	1970
These eight guides were also bound together in sets of three volumes in hardback red covers for use in FRCC Huts and as presentation copies.				

The "Fifth Series" was also edited by John Wilkinson and differed little in external appearance from the Fourth, the major difference being the introduction of the now familiar flowing script for the titles though the spines were still block lettered. Heaton Cooper remained the illustrator.



The 5th Series introduced the familiar flowing title script.

5th Series	Plastic Cover, Script Title, Date on Spine			
TITLE	COVER	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Great Langdale	(red)	JA Austin and R Valentine	J Wilkinson	1973
Scafell Group	(purple)	M Burbage and W Young	J Wilkinson	1974
Dow Crag	(orange)	JR Martindale	J Wilkinson	1976
Great Gable	(yellow)	PL Fearnchough	J Wilkinson	1977
Pillar Rock	(grey)	AG Cram	J Wilkinson	1977
Borrowdale	(blue)	S Clark	J Wilkinson	1978

This final volume by Syd Clark was the first FRCC guide to feature numerical E grades, which had already appeared in the Lakes in the privately published *Lake District North* and also in the FRCC 1978 Recent Developments supplement. There was considerable internal wrangling in the FRCC Guidebook Committee before this newfangled grading system was allowed into a proper guidebook.

But the FRCC had come in for savage criticism from Ken Wilson in an Editorial in *Mountain 57* (1977). In a broad attack on all the guidebook producing clubs, which Wilson saw as the major guardians of the aid-free ethics of

British climbing, he complained that by failing to modernise and produce what the climbers wanted, they were leaving the market open to selected guidebook writers who would cream off the best routes, ignore the history and ethics of the region, and kill off definitive guidebook sales for less popular areas. "In the Lake District," he wrote, "there is excessive regional division in terms of guides. There is no doubt that the Pillar, Gable and Buttermere guides could be merged, and it would be possible to graft Dow Crag into the Scafell guide. By these means alone, three titles would be lost, and the resulting guides would give better value. Reactionary grading policies are also in evidence, though less so in than in Scotland. The real FRCC crime is a penchant for long and archaic route descriptions: Gimmer Crack, for example, is described in terms of nine pitches (three is normal), and three and a half pages of the Scafell guide are devoted to a description of Central Buttress. Recently, three FRCC members, Eilbeck, Cram and Roper, presumably sensing that the climber was not well served by an expensive set of titles, offered to write a selected climbing guide for the club, but they were turned down. They then went to Constable, and now the FRCC is whimpering about copyright infringement, although it is doing nothing to rationalize its policies. Moreover, the club seems to be making no attempt to incorporate the new blood and new ideas that are currently gracing the Lakeland scene, and a general mood of discontent with the club's policies is now rife in the area."

This strident diatribe may not have been without some justification but it did not present the whole picture. John Wilkinson had achieved a great deal in a short time and had made many major changes. He had also recommended acceptance of the Cram, Eilbeck and Roper offer but had been overruled by the Main Committee, some of whom seriously advocated that the FRCC abandon guidebook production all together. In fact most of Wilson's recommendations were already in the pipeline and, when Wilkinson stepped down after eleven highly productive years at the helm, he was able to pass on to the new incumbent sound plans for modernisation and rationalisation, including a reduction of the series to five volumes, increasing the number of lines per page, reducing the font size and style, and much else besides.

Thus, the 'Sixth Series', under the editorship of David Miller, saw a rapidly introduced series of changes that transformed the appearance of the guides within four volumes. Leading young climbers such as Dave Armstrong, Martin Berzins, Ed Cleasby, Rob Matheson, Chris Sowden and Pete Whillance were drafted onto the Committee. The guides were made slightly larger in size and the block script on the spine was replaced by the same flowing script as on

the cover. Inside, technical grades (*Buttermere & Eastern Crags*, 1979) supplemented the E grades that had been introduced in the 1978 Borrowdale guide (technical grades were first used in Wales in 1967!). Pitch lengths measured in metres (*Borrowdale*, 1986) and two-colour, double-printed diagrams (*Scafell, Dow & Eskdale*, 1984) were other innovations. Stars (three for outstanding, two for great and one for good) appeared as well (*Buttermere & Eastern Crags* – though Paul Ross and Mike Thompson's privately published Borrowdale guide of 1966 had been the first Lakeland guide to carry them). The same guide also featured a dagger (or obelisk) symbol to indicate unchecked routes. Photographs, last included in 1926, reappeared.

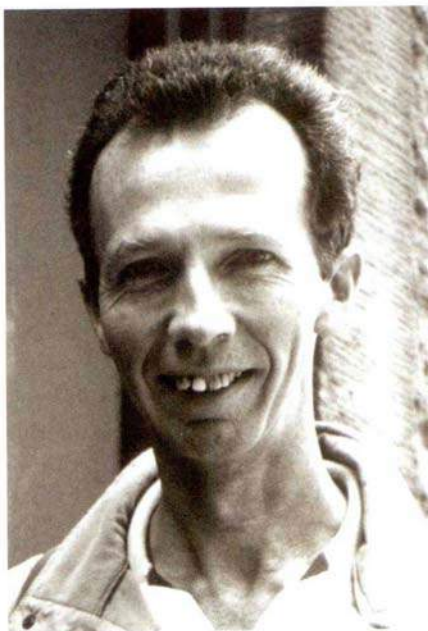
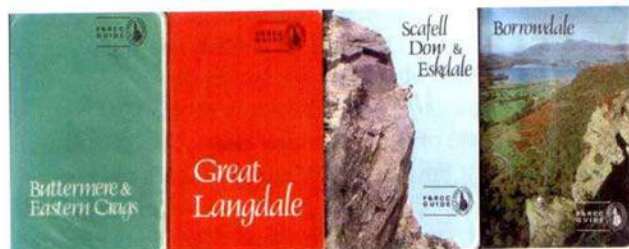


Photo: David Miller ca 1980. (Miller Collection)

A black and white frontispiece in *Buttermere & Eastern Crags*, was followed by several black and white shots in *Langdale* (1980), whilst *Scafell, Dow & Eskdale* and *Borrowdale* featured coloured photographs both inside and upon the front cover. At the same time, Al Phizacklea's technical and highly accurate crag diagrams (*Scafell, Dow & Eskdale*) replaced Heaton Cooper's rather more artistic interpretations (Jill Aldersley drew some of the diagrams in the *Buttermere & Eastern Crags* and *Langdale* guides). Also in the *Scafell, Dow & Eskdale* guide, Phizacklea introduced the first of his innovative area picture maps. The printers were changed to Joseph Ward who had produced some recent CC guides. As the new guides appeared, much of the stock of old guides from the previous series was written off and destroyed. Ultimately Miller was able to have the guidebook finances shown separately in the accounts for the first time, thus enabling a realistic appraisal of the profitability of each volume to be made.



Cover photographs appeared in the 6<sup>th</sup> Series.

6th Series	Plastic Cover , Script Title, Date on Spine, Larger Size			
TITLE	COVER	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Buttermere & Eastern Crag	(green)	I Roper, EM Grindley & GN Higginson	D Miller	1979
Great Langdale	(red)	MG Mortimer	D Miller	1980
Scafell, Dow & Eskdale	(grey)	G Willison, M Berzins, R Matheson & E Cleasby	D Miller	1984
Borrowdale	(blue)	D Armstrong & R Kenyon	D Miller	1986

The concept of a series of guides gradually became less meaningful and the advent of the Seventh Series was not marked by anything especially obvious on the outside, though internally the process of change continued apace. In fact Dave Armstrong, the new editor, continued to develop the ideas he had already introduced in the 1986 Borrowdale guide as well as implementing an ambitious rolling program of one new guide a year. The potential undesirable increase in the size of the volumes caused by the considerable number of new routes being recorded was solved by using thinner paper. Diagrams appeared within the text for the first time, and the number of photographs included was increased to improve the appearance

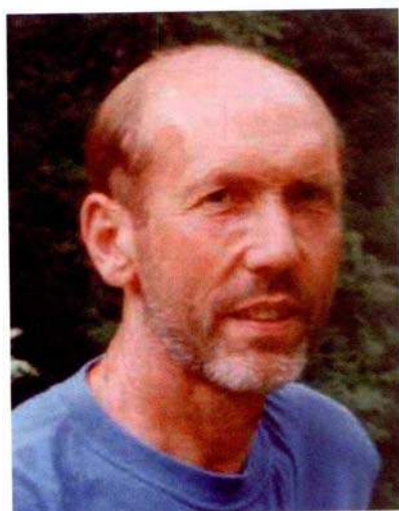
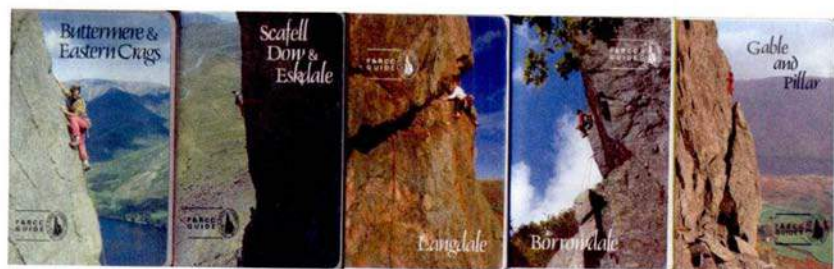


Photo: Dave Armstrong ca 1990.  
(Armstrong Collection)



of the guides. Al Phizacklea's diagrams went from strength to strength and were used almost throughout: though Dennis Lee contributed many of the Eastern Craggs diagrams. The dreaded black spot for outstandingly poor routes was first sighted in the 1990 Borrowdale guide where Ray McHaffie's Horrible Arête received the ultimate accolade of being awarded three. Advances in technology helped as well. For the first time the editor could pass his red pen over a print-out that appeared exactly as the actual guidebook layout would do. Prior to this, dot matrix print-outs, complete with print codes indicating stars, changes in text etc., were the norm and were considerably more difficult to edit. Les and Jean Ainsworth of Synergy were employed to do the type-setting, a task they continued with for over 20 years.



The 7<sup>th</sup> Series.

7th Series	Plastic Cover, Picture On Front			
TITLE	COVER	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Buttermere & Eastern Craggs	(green)	D Craig, R Graham, J Earl, A Griffiths & R Smith	D Miller	1987
Scafell, Dow & Eskdale	(grey)	A Phizacklea	D Miller & DW Armstrong	1988
Langdale	(red)	D Armstrong, P Rigby & J White	DW Armstrong	1989
Borrowdale,	(blue)	RJ Kenyon	DW Armstrong	1990
Gable and Pillar	(yellow)	D Kirby & J Loxham	DW Armstrong	1991

Our current series is the eighth and is distinguished by the introduction of colour photographs on the back as well as the front covers. Dave Armstrong stepped down after the appearance of *Dow Duddon & Slate* in 1994, feeling (quite rightly!) that he had done a fair stint. Al Phizacklea took over as Editor and Ron Kenyon became the first Business Manager, a post suggested by Armstrong to lessen the burden on the Editor. This process of sharing responsibility has been continued and it has since been found useful to appoint Diagram and Photograph Sub-Editors as well. Since 1992, Peter Hodgkiss of the Ernest Press (a specialist mountaineering publisher), has taken over from Wards as printer.

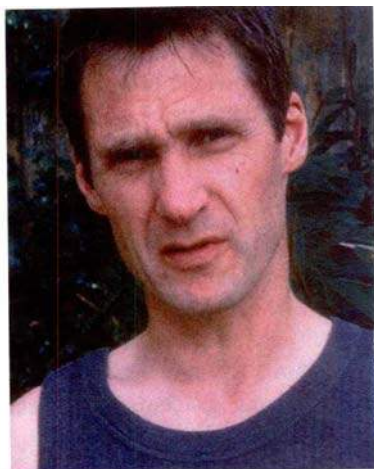


Photo: Al Phizacklea in 2004. Guidebook Editor 1994–1998, but diagram artist extraordinaire from 1984 onwards, and current Diagrams Editor. (Ken Wilson)



Photo: Ron Kenyon in 1990. Stalwart of the Guidebook Committee, and current Guidebooks Secretary. (Stephen Reid)

After single-handedly writing, illustrating and editing *Scafell, Dow & Eskdale*, Al was finding the workload too exhausting and resigned as editor, and for a year or so the FRCC's guidebook work languished in the doldrums, for though Ron Kenyon was nominally shown as editor in club records, he never actually accepted the post. Eventually Stephen Reid was persuaded to give it a go, and so, under three different editors, the guides of the Eighth Series have continued to evolve whilst at the same time retaining the best of the more traditional characteristics which have over time proven their worth. Armstrong had already decided to split the Scafell, Dow and Eskdale areas into two volumes, a decision made essential by the explosion of routes in the Duddon Valley and slate quarries. In the 1996

Scafell guide, two-colour diagrams were interspersed with the text for the first time, a process that would have been prohibitively expensive a few years earlier. *Dow, Duddon & Slate* (1994) saw French grades introduced for fully bolted routes. *Langdale* (1999), remains the same size and format as its predecessors, but on closer scrutiny contains a number of innovations. At the request of some leading Lakeland climbers, French grades have been introduced for climbs of E6 and above, whether bolted or not, ‘?-mark’ grades now indicate climbs where the grade is in doubt, and hollow stars have been given to routes whose quality has been claimed by the first ascensionists but has yet to be confirmed by anyone else. In a bid to spread the wear and tear on popular routes, far more climbs have been starred than in previous guides. Though perhaps the most talked about innovation was the inclusion of a simple red book-mark ribbon!

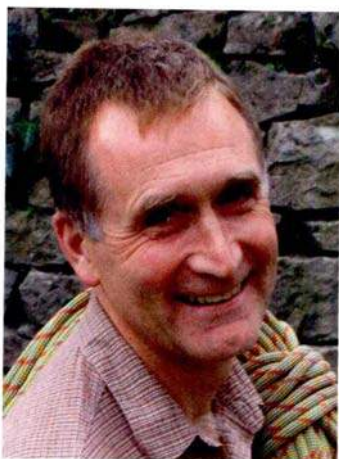
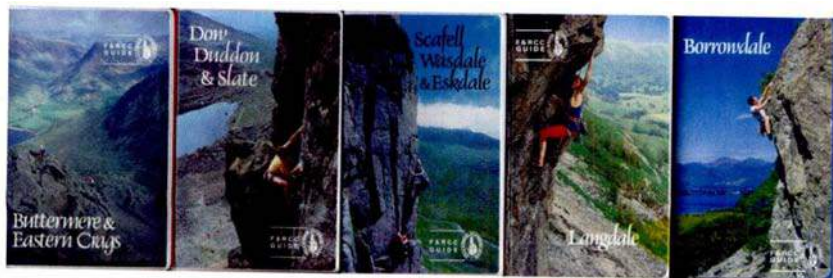


Photo: Nick Wharton (Photographs Editor) in 2004. With the advent of colour printing on every page his job has expanded enormously. (Nick Wharton coll.)

The latest definitive guide, *Borrowdale* (2000), continues the process of gradual innovation whilst retaining the good points and popular format of past guides. It includes a new tabular crag guide which indicates at a glance the nature of the crags, as well as a comprehensive Bowderstone bouldering guide. At 400 pages, it is the fattest definitive guide the FRCC have ever produced. The dedication to Ray MacHaffie “without whose efforts this guide would not be half the volume that it is” explains why!



The 8<sup>th</sup> Series.

8th Series	Plastic Cover, Picture on Front & Back			
TITLE	COVER	AUTHOR	EDITOR	DATE
Buttermere and Eastern Craggs	(green)	R Graham, A Davis & T Price	DW Armstrong	1992
Dow, Duddon & Slate	(orange)	A Phizacklea	DW Armstrong	1994
Scafell, Wasdale & Eskdale	(purple)	A Phizacklea	A Phizacklea	1996
Langdale	(red)	RM Biden	SJH Reid	1999
Borrowdale	(blue)	G Baum & A Hewison	SJH Reid	2000

A major challenge for the future seems to be how to cope with the phenomenal growth in the number of new climbs which, despite constant predictions to the contrary since the time of Owen Glynn Jones, shows little sign of abating. These cannot be ignored for many of them are excellent, yet the size of the guidebooks must expand to accommodate them. To an extent this has been done by further reducing the weight of the paper. At the time of publishing the *Borrowdale* guide, the 90g/m<sup>2</sup> paper we used was the ultimate low weight possible without taking the retrograde step of moving the diagrams to the back of the book again. At the same time, a guidebook content of 400 or so



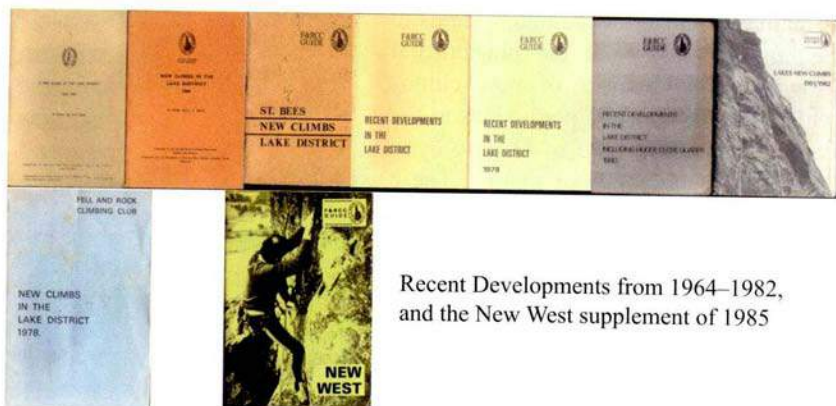
Photo: Stephen Reid in 2000.  
(Chris Bonington)

pages was the upper limit beyond which a guidebook was in danger of becoming both unwieldy and fragile. However the new FRCC selected rock climbing guide *Lake District Rock* (see below) uses a very high quality 80g/m<sup>2</sup> and has over 500 pages, so maybe there is now breathing space for future definitive guides. A few other solutions are possible, most have been tried, if not by ourselves, by other producers. We may have to resort to them in the end. But for now, we are coping and, as the accolades received in the climbing press following the publication of all the guides of the present series show, we are coping well.

Plans for the future include a completely new winter climbing guide to be published in conjunction with Cicerone Press in time for winter 2006, Gable, Pillar, Buttermere and St Bees in 2007, and Eastern Craggs, Eden Valley and South Lakes Limestone in 2008. A major innovation for the club in all these guides will be the use, wherever possible, of colour photo topos for locating the routes.

## FRCC RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In recent years, dating from the start of John Wilkinson's editorship, the Club also produced card-covered pamphlets, slightly smaller in size than a guide, containing details of new routes. Latterly these were produced biannually.



Recent Developments from 1964–1982, and the New West supplement of 1985



Recent Developments from 1983–2002

Supplements	Card Cover, Various Titles	
	TITLE	AUTHOR
Seventy-Five New Climbs in the Lake District 1964-65	D Miller & NJ Soper	1966
New Climbs in the Lake District 1966	D Miller & J Austin	1967
St Bees, New Climbs, Lake District	A.G. Cram	1972
Recent Developments in the Lake District	Dave Armstrong, Pete Botterill & Pete Whillance	1978
New Climbs (offprint FRCC Journal No 66, p 44-59)	Ed Grindley	1978
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1979	M Berzins	1979
Recent Developments in the Lake District including Hodge Close Quarry 1980	M Berzins	1980
Lakes New Climbs 1981/1982	Dave Armstrong & Pete Whillance	1983
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1983-1984	Al Phizacklea & Ron Kenyon	1985
New West	Bill Young	1985
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1985-1986	Ron Kenyon	1987
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1987-1988	Ron Kenyon	1989
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1989-1990	Ron Kenyon	1991
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1991-1992	Stephen Reid	1993
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1993-1994	George Wright	1995
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1995-1996	Ron Kenyon	1997
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1997-1998	Stephen Reid	1999
Recent Developments in the Lake District 1999-2000	Stephen Reid	2001
Recent Developments in the Lake District 2001-2002	Stephen Reid	2003
On the initial print run the cover photo was printed back to front. A few of these escaped destruction prior to a reprint.		

The 1978 supplement, edited by David Miller, was a real "Bumper Fun Book" containing all the new routes recorded since the early part of the decade, including many now famous classic Extremes such as Footless Crow, Bitter Oasis, Saxon, Shere Khan, Dry Grasp, Gates of Delirium and Eastern Hammer. Many of these climbs had been purposely omitted from the guidebooks

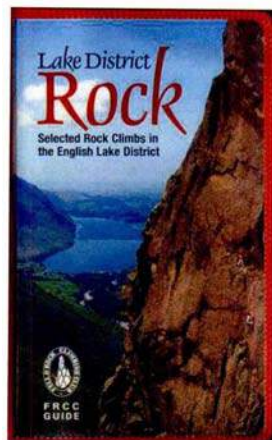


because they used aid. It contained E grades and technical grades for all routes and was the first FRCC publication to have them – it is perhaps no coincidence that none of the authors were members of the FRCC at the time! The 81/82 supplement include a “Top 50” graded list of known 6bs – crucial for young tickers. *New West* updated the existing Gable and Pillar Guides, then ten years old, and the 85/86 supplement recorded winter as well as summer routes, a practice that was maintained thereafter even though the Lake District winter guide is published by Cicerone, a private publisher.

For the last few years, all new routes recorded in each area since the last current guide, have been available to download and print out free of charge from the FRCC’s website at <http://www.frcc.co.uk>, and so, in 2003, the decision was taken not to produce further Recent Developments supplements.

## FRCC SELECTED CLIMBS GUIDE

Guidebooks of selected climbs are not new. Constable published the first major one to the Lake District in 1975, though this had been preceded by Cicerone’s small pamphlets of selected easier climbs (1969–1972). However by the turn of the century it was obvious that there was a need for a new selected guide in a modern format, and the feeling was that if the FRCC did not produce it, someone else would. The result has probably changed the look of the club’s guides forever. Most notable, apart from the appearance of photographs of varying sizes scattered liberally throughout, are Al Phizacklea’s masterful crag diagrams, which have been totally transformed by the use of colour – it is pleasing to note that Al was awarded honorary membership of the club after the publication of this guide. The guide also contained over 500 pages and yet still remained a handy pocket-size volume due to the use of even finer paper. Colour layout and design was undertaken by the Sheffield based firm Vertebrate Graphics. In 2004, *Lake District Rock* was awarded the Titus Wilson prize at the Lake District Book of the Year Awards.



TITLE	COVER	EDITOR	DATE
Lake District Rock	(maroon)	SJH Reid	2003

Appearing not long before the centenary of the club, it seemed fitting to dedicate *Lake District Rock* to the founding members of the FRCC and to the editors of its previous guidebooks as part of the centenary celebrations. And this seems a convenient point too at which to stop this history of FRCC guidebooks, though I have no doubt that it has many more happy (and profitable) years to run.

## OTHER GUIDES, PAMPHLETS & EPHEMERA

In addition to the above "official guides", the Lake District has been well served by privately published books, the earliest of which predated the FRCC guides by many years. They range from handsome, richly illustrated volumes to little more than photocopied sheets. In order of first appearance they are:

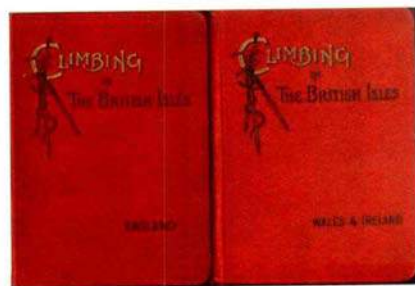
### C.N. Williamson

CN Williamson was an early explorer of the Lakeland Crags and Fells and published what is almost certainly the first article on Lakeland climbing containing proper route descriptions, under the title of *The Climbs of the English Lake District*. This appeared in two parts in Vol XXV of the magazine *All Year Round* which was at the time edited by Charles Dickens junior. The article was reprinted in Vol I of the FRCC Journal.

The Climbs of the English Lake District	CN Williamson	All the Year Round Vol XXV	1881
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### Haskett-Smith

Walter Parry Haskett-Smith is considered by many authorities to be the most important of the founding fathers of rock climbing with his solo ascent of Napes Needle in 1886 being the single most influential act in the development of the fledgling sport. Haskett-Smith's guidebooks have the distinction of been the first such ever published on British climbing. Many routes are included,



Climbing in the British Isles 1<sup>st</sup> Ed.



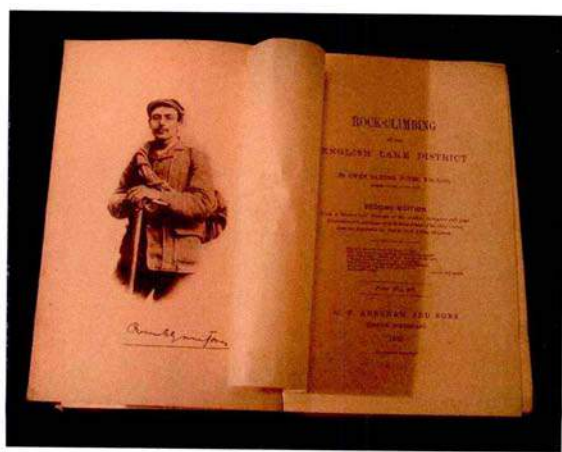
though the format is distinctly different from any modern guide, as climbs, crags and mountains are all described in alphabetical order. The Irish section was written by HC Hart, and the illustrations were by Ellis Carr. A planned third volume on Scotland was never published.

The 1986 Ernest Press reprint contained an article on Haskett-Smith by Jim Perrin.

Climbing in the British Isles, (2 Vols–Vol 1 covers England including the Lake District, hardback)	WP Haskett-Smith	Longmans	1894/5
Climbing in the British Isles, (1 Vol – facsimile reprint of the original 2 vols bound as one, hardback)	WP Haskett-Smith	Ernest Press	1986

### Owen Glynn Jones

It is said that Jones was inspired to climb by the sight of a photograph of Napes Needle displayed in a shop window in The Strand. He quickly proved to be a formidably strong climber and made many new routes in the Lake District, often partnered by the Abraham brothers whose photographs illustrated his book *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District*. He was killed in the alps in 1899. *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District* is a large lavishly illustrated volume and was certainly not designed to be carried in a rucksack.



The spine and title page of the second edition of Jones's *Rock Climbing in the English Lake District*

Rock Climbing in the English Lake District (hardback)	OG Jones	GP Abraham	1897
Rock Climbing in the English Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	OG Jones	GP Abraham	1900
Rock Climbing in the English Lake District 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.	OG Jones	Longmans	1911
Rock Climbing in the English Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. reprint	OG Jones	EJ Morten	1973
Rock Climbing in the English Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. reprint this was in a different cover to the 1973 version	OG Jones	EJ Morten	1978

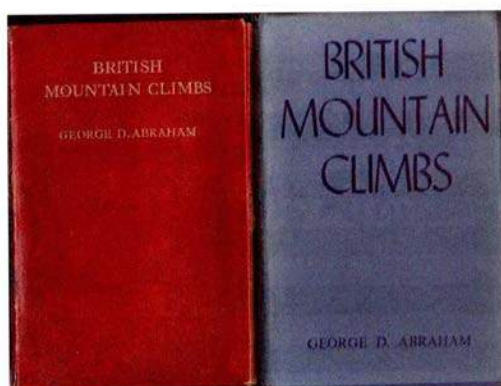
The second, and subsequent editions, contain an obituary of Jones by WM Crooks as well as additional routes and other material contributed by George and Ashley Abraham.

### George Abraham

George Abraham was a pioneering rock climber both in the Lake District and elsewhere. He and his brother Ashley (who was the first President of the FRCC) ran their family photographic business in Keswick and produced many other early guides and climbing books.

*British Mountain Climbs* was the first of the proper guidebooks to the Lakes (it also covered Wales and Scotland) and was a compact pocket-sized volume

containing concise route descriptions, though these were nowhere near as terse as those of Harry Kelly's later Pillar guide. The first edition was bound in two formats; one had a clever box cover designed to keep the guide in good condition when in use.



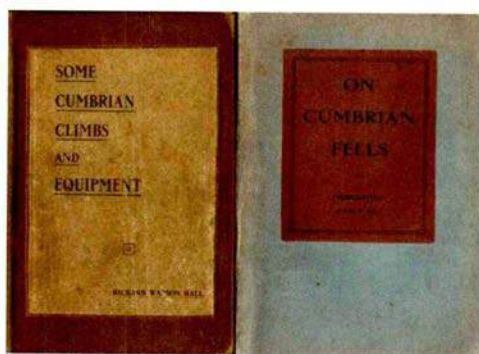
1<sup>st</sup> (boxed version) and 6<sup>th</sup> (final) editions of *British Mountain Climbs*

British Mountain Climbs (box cover)	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1909
British Mountain Climbs (softback)	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1909
British Mountain Climbs 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed. (hardback)	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1923
British Mountain Climbs 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1932
British Mountain Climbs 4 <sup>th</sup> ed.	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1937
British Mountain Climbs 5 <sup>th</sup> ed.	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1945
British Mountain Climbs 6 <sup>th</sup> ed.	GD Abraham	Mills & Boon	1948

There was also a "Cheaper Edition" which is undated but was printed at some time between 1912 and 1922. Although titled as separate editions each book contained little new information and can really be considered a reprint.

### Richard Watson Hall

Hall was a friend of John Wilson Robinson and presented Robinson's diaries and many other artifacts to the FRCC. He was also a journalist on several local papers, sometimes using the nom de plume "Hobcarton", and published a number of books of which two contain some descriptions of climbs. In fact they are not really different books at all, for



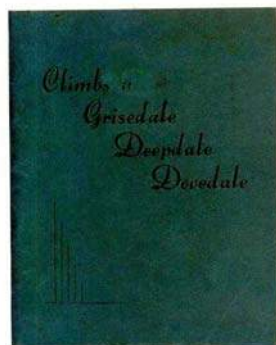
the second, *On Cumbrian Fells*, contains the whole of *Some Cumbrian Climbs and Equipment* with the addition of several extra routes tagged on to the climbs section, plus a selection of short essays on Cumbrian rural life.

Some Cumbrian Climbs & Equipment, (hardback)	Richard Watson Hall	"Times" Printing Works, Cockermouth	1923 (undated)
On Cumbrian Fells 1 <sup>st</sup> ed. (hardback)	'Hobcarton' (Richard W Hall)	The Whitehaven News Ltd	1926
On Cumbrian Fells 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	'Hobcarton' (Richard W Hall)	The Whitehaven News Ltd	1926

There are two editions of *On Cumbrian Fells* but it is not certain which was the first. Both are dated MDCCCCXXVI on the title page. One has 76 numbered pages and its index has page numbers. The first story "On a Little Town" is arbitrarily split into two sections with the second section wrongly titled. The second has 77 numbered pages, its index has no page numbers, and the stories appear in a different order. The date 1926 appears on a final un-numbered page.

### Sheffield University

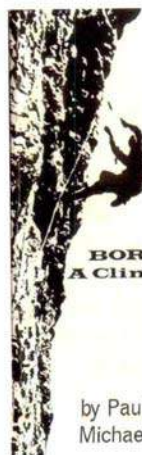
Sheffield University had use of Ruthwaite Lodge, Grisedale, as a mountaineering club hut, and produced this small green-coloured pamphlet at a time when the FRCC had confined the Eastern Fells to the Outlying Crags section of the 1938 Dow guide in which only nine routes were described. The FRCC's *Eastern Fells* by Harold Drasdo (1959) quite rightly acknowledged the work of this guide.



Climbs in Grisedale, Deepdale & Dovedale	SUMC members	Sheffield University MC	1956 undated
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### Borrowdale – Ross & Thompson

This private guide to Borrowdale was published largely due to Paul Ross and Mike Thomson's frustration at the FRCC's slowness in updating its own 1953 guide which was re-issued as a reprint with no new material in 1966. Ross and Thompson introduced E grades and stars (albeit a maximum of one per route) to the Lake District for the first time. Most remarkably the whole guide was conceived, written, put together and published in just six weeks – though not without a few mistakes, one of which, FRCC Borrowdale guidebook writer Paul Nunn's route *Deadly Nightshade* appearing as *Deadly Nightshirt*, may have been done accidentally on purpose!



The Fell & Rock were horrified and threatened legal action though nothing came of it. It did however galvanise them into action and their own updated

guide appeared in 1968 by which time the 2000 copies of this “pirate” guide had almost sold out.

Borrowdale, A Climber's Guide, paperback	Paul Ross and Michael Thompson	1966
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### St Bees – Angell

Climbing at St Bees gained in popularity due to a foot and mouth epidemic that made access to most of the Lake District problematical. This, the first St Bees guide, took the form of cyclostyled pamphlet without a cover and was later updated twice. Interestingly Haskett-Smith mentions the St Bees cliffs and the fact that the Rev. James Jackson (the self-styled “Patriarch of the Pillarites”) was fond of climbing about them.

Interim Guide to St. Bees Head	Ian Angell	1968
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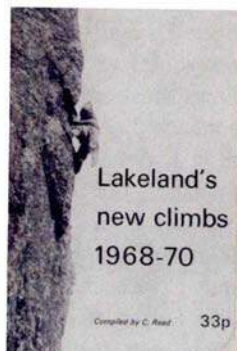
### Kendal MC

Kendal Mountaineering Club Journal N°2, 1969	Ed: John Parker	Kendal MC	1969
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This issue contained an article called *Ten routes in Kentmere* by Des Marshall. The routes described were apparently considered insignificant by the FRCC at the time and have since been claimed by other climbers. This error has still to be corrected in the FRCC Eastern Craggs guidebook. It also contained an article on new climbs in Eskdale by Mick Goff. A further article on Kentmere was promised for the next issue but did not appear.

### Colin Read

Colin Read decided to go into print as he felt that the FRCC hierarchy had deliberately ignored routes, both his own and those of other climbers, that had involved some use of aid. This was during a period when first ascents were nearly always made from the ground up without pre-inspection and, on routes of E2 and E3 in standard, aid points were often used for gardening. The few years preceding this guide were particularly productive for Read and many of the routes described are his. This was a pamphlet type booklet similar in size to the FRCC supplements.



Lakeland's New Climbs 1968 - 70	C Read	1970
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### Karabiner MC

A 12 page photocopied pamphlet insert in the Karabiner MC newsletter.

Latterbrow Crag, Wasdale	Alan Jones & Alan Shepard	Karabiner MC Newsletter	1970
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Jones and Shepard spotted Latterbrow Crag whilst walking on Wasdale Screes and subsequently developed it. The descriptions never made it into an FRCC guide however, and Latterbarrow was subsequently redeveloped by others, prior to the owners banning climbing there altogether.

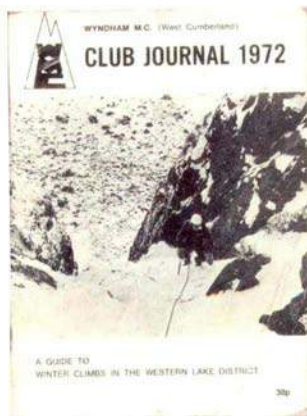


### Wyndham MC

Wyndham MC was based in West Cumbria and eventually changed its name to West Cumbria MC. It produced a number of small guides, mainly under the influence of Bob Bennett.

Wyndham MC Club Journal 1972	Ed: Ian Angell	Wyndham MC	1972
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Half of this A5 card covered journal was devoted to *A Guide to Winter Climbs in the Lake District* which, although unattributed, was written by Bob Bennett, and was in fact the precursor to Cicerone's winter climbing guide.



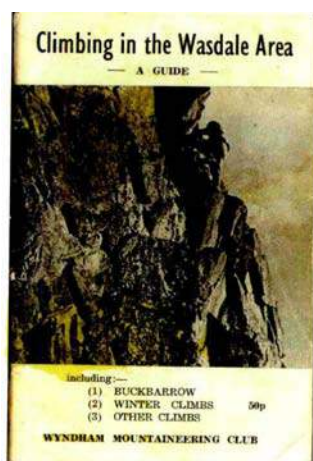
Buckbarrow – Wasdale – An Interim Guide	Ed: Bob Bennett	Wyndam MC	ca1974
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This card covered pamphlet was a much more amateur production than the following one. A sheet supplement was issued in 1979.



Climbing in the Wasdale Area	Ed: Bob Bennett	Wyndam MC	1974/5
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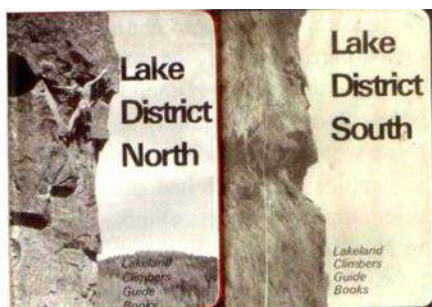
A card covered A5 pamphlet that brought areas such as Buckbarrow up to date and also described winter climbs. It was produced at the request of the manager of the Wasdale Head Inn and sold to visitors.



### Lakeland Climbers Guide Books

A short-lived attempt to produce highly condensed guides with minimalist descriptions. The guides were almost definitive in that they included virtually every climb, and certainly all the worthwhile ones, in their area. They were the first Lakeland guides to use E grades, a concept that the FRCC had long resisted but were quick to copy in the 1978

Borrowdale guide. They also introduced metres for pitch lengths.



Lake District North (plastic cover)	Steve Clegg, Colin Read & Bob Wilson	1978
Lake District South (plastic cover)	Steve Clegg, Colin Read & Bob Wilson	1979

*Lake District West* was written but never published due to the massive increase in printing costs caused by the high rate of inflation at the time.

### New Climbs Bulletins

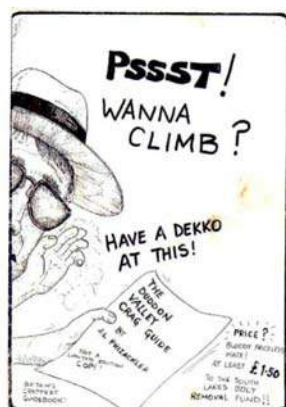
Details of some new climbs also appeared in various annual bulletins, all with card covers in A5 format. Initially these were produced by the Climbers Club, then taken over by the British Mountaineering Council and finally published privately by *Rocksport*. Although other issues mention Lakeland climbs, often in purpose-written "Lakeland Letters", as far as I can ascertain the below listed pamphlets are the only ones containing actual route descriptions for the area. Basically Lake District route descriptions appear to have been included in full mainly in periods when no recent developments supplements were being produced locally. It should perhaps be mentioned that the 1967 CC New Climbs Bulletin included a large list of Lakeland climbs with their technical pitch grades.

TITLE	PRODUCED BY	DATE
New Climbs 1970	CC	1970
New Climbs 1971-1972 (2 Volumes)	BMC	1972
New Climbs 1973	BMC	1973
New Climbs 1974	Rocksport	1974



## Topos

In the early 90's a boom in new routes in various areas, particularly in the quarries, saw publication of a number of photocopied sheets and pamphlets known colloquially as "topos". Many of these were sold in Rock & Run, a climbing shop in Ambleside, which had set up a bolt fund for re-equipping of sports climbs. Others were sold in Needle Sports in Keswick for a similar purpose. Most of these were undated and some were updated as new routes were done and thus appeared in several formats. There may well have been others. More recently Rockfax have produced an up-market version of these in their PDF downloadable "Miniguides" that the user purchases via the internet. In addition numerous bouldering topos have become available free of charge through the same medium: the main sites for these are [www.lakesbloc.co.uk](http://www.lakesbloc.co.uk) and [www.lakesbouldering.co.uk](http://www.lakesbouldering.co.uk) (the latter being entirely devoted to Eskdale). All these web topos are likely to have gone through many variations and dates are approximate. In 2005, Martin Bagness produced a series of colour photo-topos with the blessing of the FRCC. These concentrated on areas of small crags like the Upper Duddon, where there had been a lot of new development but a new guidebook was still many years away.



Right: Al Phizacklea's masterful "Duddon Valley Crag Guide", was by far the best production from the hand-drawn topo era of the '90s. Note the man on the cover with two left hands!

Hodge Close Topos	Double sided sheet with diagrams. Bolted routes only. Included the All Weather Gym. At least three 'editions'.	Martin Bagness	1990
Black Hole Topo	Double sided sheet with diagrams. At least three 'editions'.	Martin Bagness	1990
Tilberthwaite Topos	Double sided sheet with diagrams.	Martin Bagness	1990
Runestone Quarry & Rascal How Quarries	Double sided sheet with diagrams. Rascal How Quarry's true name is Blue Quarry	Martin Bagness	1990

Hodge Close	A four page pamphlet with diagrams.	Al Phizacklea	1991
Hardknott Crag	Single sided sheet with diagram.	Al Phizacklea	1991
The Duddon Valley Crag Guide	Sixteen page pamphlet with diagrams - a unique topo guide containing every route in the valley. The first 20 were individually signed and numbered.	Al Phizacklea	1991
Eskdale Quarry	Single sided topo diagram	Pete Whillance	1991
Bell Stand	Single sided topo diagram	Pete Whillance	1991
The above two diagrams were used in the FRCC guide Scafell, Wasdale & Eskdale, 1996			
St Bees	Double sided sheet with diagrams. Later an Apiary Wall update was added in several formats (one of these was by Stuart Miller). Numerous versions.	Andy Jones & Al Phizacklea	1991
Bouldering at St Bees	Double sided sheet with diagrams	Mark Johnson	1998
Bouldering at St Bees Update 99	Six single sided pages	Mark Johnson	1999
Dalt Quarry, Quayfoot & Cave Quarries	Double sided sheet with diagrams - initial two single sheets. At least two editions	Dave Nichol	1993
Bramcrag Quarry	Double sided sheet with diagrams	Andy Slattery	1991
Church Crag, St Johns in the Vale	Single sided, descriptions only. Several 'editions'.	Stephen Reid	1993
Sergeant Crag Slabs	Double sided, descriptions only. Many editions.	Stephen Reid	1996
New Routes at Falcon Crag & Reccastle Crag	Double sided, descriptions only	Stephen Reid	1998
New Routes at Shepherd's Crag	Double sided, descriptions only	Stephen Reid	1998

New Routes at Quayfoot Buttress & Greatend Crag	Double sided, descriptions only	Stephen Reid	1998
New Routes at Mart Crag	Double sided with a diagram	Stephen Reid	1998
New Routes at Pillar Rock and Ennerdale	Double sided, descriptions only	Stephen Reid	1998
Virtual Crag Bouldering	Single sheet with diagram	Andy Hyslop	1998
Chapel Stile Bouldering Circuit	Single sheet with diagram	Andy Hyslop	1998
New Dollywaggon	7 page colour Rockfax – downloadable “Miniguide” PDF file to new winter climbs on the Helvellyn escarpment .	Andy Hyslop	2003
Langdale Bouldering	13 page colour Rockfax – downloadable “Miniguide” PDF file to the Langdale Boulders and Chapel Stile Circuit.	Andy Hyslop	2003
Joe’s Crag, Haweswater	Eight page colour topo and route descriptions to an area of Whelter Crag named in memory of Jim Fotheringham’s son.	Jim Fotheringham	2003
Black Moss Pot	Described as “The Lake District’s Premier Deep Water Soloing Venue!” A tongue in cheek production by A Huddart. 4 page PDF file.	Lancaster University Mountaineering Club	2003
Kentmere Valley	7 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Goucher Crag Boulders	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Langdale Boulders	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
The Ladstones	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
The Virtual Crag	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Black Crag Wrynose	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
The Heron Stones	3 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4

Sampson's Stones	4 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Stirrup Boulders	4 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Gillercombe Boulders	6 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Honister Pass Boulders	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Langstrath Boulders	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Thirlmere Boulders	3 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
St Bees Head	5 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
Carrock Fell Boulders	4 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
The Bowderstone	4 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2003/4
The Diamond	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
The Cave	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
The Gem	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
White Slab	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Wall Boulders	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Cleft Boulders & Foxes Den	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Fisherground Needle Area	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Wilderness	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
The Animal	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Afro Boulder	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Lightening Crack Area	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Style Face	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2003/4
Dove Crag 2005	Printable webpage on hard new routes	Steve Crowe	2005
Long Crag Bouldering	2 page PDF file.	Lakesbloc	2005
Dove Crag Boulders	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2005
Overbeck Boulder	Printable webpage	Lakesbouldering	2005

1. Blisco	2 page colour topo in sealed plastic bag	Lakes Rock Topos	2005
2. Gaitkins	2 page colour topo in sealed plastic bag	Lakes Rock Topos	2005
3. Little Stand	2 page colour topo in sealed plastic bag	Lakes Rock Topos	2005
Set of 5 Route Cards	Small cards each containing detailed information on one classic Lakeland route. Issued free with the magazine	Climb Magazine	2005

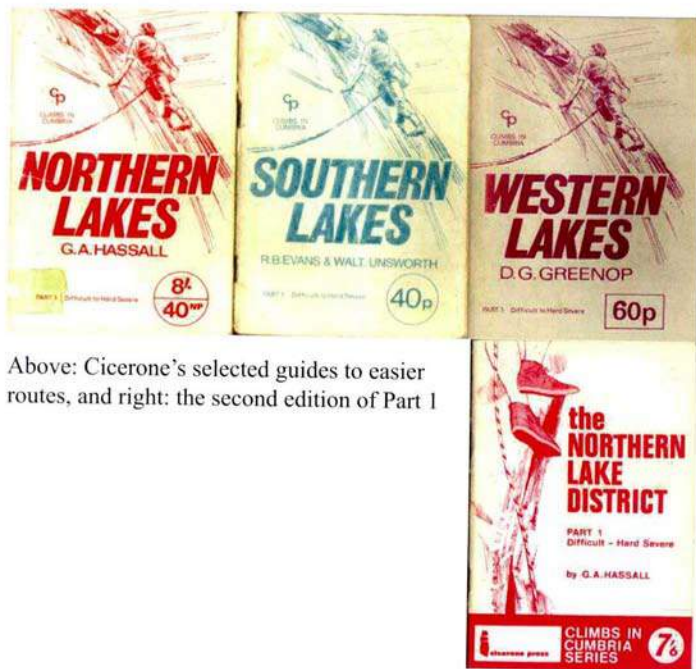
## OTHER GUIDES, SELECTED CLIMBS GUIDES

### Cicerone Press

These economical card covered guides contained a selection of easier routes in each area.

They were first of many hundreds of guidebooks published by Cicerone.

Part 2 of this series, which was intended to cover harder climbs, was never published.



Above: Cicerone's selected guides to easier routes, and right: the second edition of Part 1

The Northern Lake District Part 1 Difficult – Hard Severe (7'6d)	GA Hassal	Cicerone	1969
Northern Lakes Part 1, Difficult to Hard Severe (8'-/40np)	GA Hassal	Cicerone	1969?
These are identical in all but format and cover, the former being slightly larger. Although the latter is dated 1969 this is unlikely as decimal currency was not introduced until 1971!			
Southern Lakes, Part 1, Difficult to Hard Severe	RB Evans & Walt Unsworth	Cicerone	1971
Western Lakes, Part 1 Difficult to Hard Severe	DG Greenop	Cicerone	1972

### Constable

The idea of a selected climbing guide containing photo-diagrams to an area was not new. Ron James's *Rock Climbing in Wales* had been published by Constable in 1970. *Rock Climbing in the Lake District* followed a similar format and was written by three very active locals, all of whom were members of the FRCC. It was quite an expensive guide for its day due to the large number of black and white photos and photo-diagrams it contained. After it appeared, Terry Sullivan wrote damning indictment of what he termed 'composite. . . scissors and glue. . . cut price. . . guidebooks' in his editorial *The Guidebook Question* in the 1976 FRCC Journal. In it he argued that the important issue was both 'ethical and financial', and posed the question, 'Ethically is it right for individuals to take information that has been collectively owned and accumulated by the climbing society since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and turn that



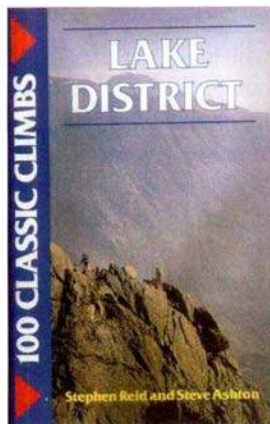
1st Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Reprint, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition and 4<sup>th</sup> Edition 2<sup>nd</sup> Reprint of *Rock Climbing in the Lake District*. The other reprints had identical covers to their predecessors.

information into a publication which brings personal gain to the 'author(s)'. He went on to point out that privately published selected guides were likely to harm the sales of non-profit making definitive guides, and that guides to less popular areas may become unviable if their publication were not supported financially by buoyant sales of guides to more popular areas. And just in case there were still lingering grounds for doubt, he asked the reader to consider the question, 'could these 'Composites' have been produced without the ability to plagiarise from, and draw freely on, the existing, published stock of knowledge?', and concluded that '*individuals* acting in their own self-interest do not necessarily produce an outcome in line with the *collective* good'. These well thought out arguments would have carried rather more weight however, had not the opportunity to publish this guide been offered to the FRCC by Geoff Cram (and recommended by FRCC Guidebook Editor John Wilkinson) but turned down by the Club – a shame as it has since gone on to sell well over 15,000 copies! Later editions were updated by Bill Birkett, son of the famous Lakeland climber Jim Birkett, and a leading activist in his own right.

Rock Climbing in the Lake District (hardback)	Geoff Cram, Chris Eilbeck & Ian Roper	Constable	1975
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Geoff Cram, Chris Eilbeck & Ian Roper	Constable	1977
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Reprint		1981
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Reprint		1984
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. (plastic cover)	Bill Birkett, Geoff Cram, Chris Eilbeck & Ian Roper	Constable	1987
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 4 <sup>th</sup> ed.	Bill Birkett, Geoff Cram, Chris Eilbeck & Ian Roper	Constable	1990
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 4 <sup>th</sup> ed.	Reprint		1994
Rock Climbing in the Lake District 4 <sup>th</sup> ed.	Reprint		1998

### Crowood Press

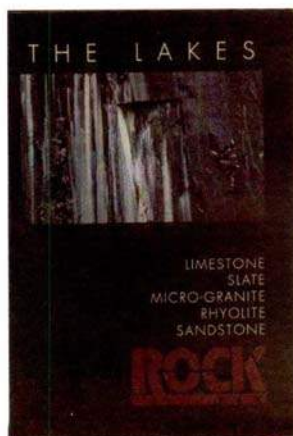
This guide, containing an unusual combination of short essays and topo diagrams, was the brain-child of Steve Ashton. He produced companion volumes for Wales, Scotland, The Peak District and Yorkshire, but other titles planned were never published. The Lake District volume was written by Stephen Reid whilst Ashton edited the text and drew the diagrams. The first edition and second impression had plastic covers.



100 Classic Climbs - Lake District	Stephen Reid & Steve Ashton	Crowood	1989
100 Classic Climbs Lake District	2 <sup>nd</sup> Impression		1992
100 Classic Climbs Lake District	3 <sup>rd</sup> Impression	card cover	1995
100 Classic Climbs Lake District	4 <sup>th</sup> Impression	card cover	1998

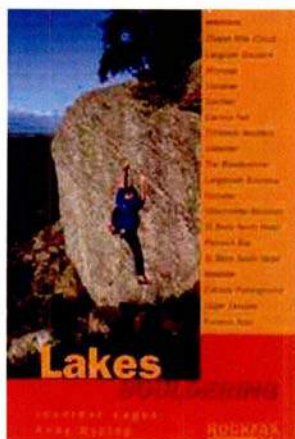
### Rockfax

The appearance of this selected guide with topo diagrams concentrating virtually entirely on the bolt protected climbs in the area, was fuelled by the boom in sport climbing then taking place. Hyslop and Cornforth were two of the most active participants at that time. It was just pipped to the post by the FRCC's *Dow Duddon & Slate*, but remained the main source of information on South Lakes Limestone until 1999 when a new Lancashire guide appeared, and it is still the only complete guide to the more modern bolt protected climbs on St Bees. It is part of a large and on-going series of commercial guide-books, covering many parts of the world, and was published under the editorship of Alan James and Mick Ryan. Card cover.





More recently Rockfax have pioneered the development of downloadable “Mini-Guides” which consist of a PDF file that can be printed out on a home computer. These are listed in topos section above. And, just as this article was about to go to press, the new Rockfax bouldering guide to the Lakes appeared. This is a very modern guide full of colour photo topos and it has certainly set a high standard of presentation for other Lake District guides to emulate in the future. At the same time though, no attempt has been made to recount even the briefest history of bouldering in the Lakes – a shame as it would have made interesting reading. Card cover.



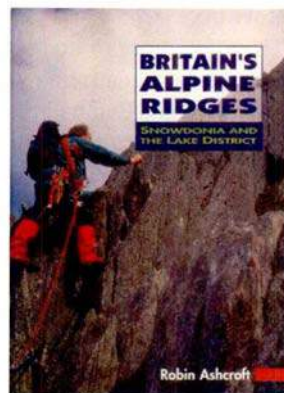
The Lakes	Andy Hyslop & Paul Cornforth	Rockfax	1994
Lakes Bouldering	Jonathan Lagoe & Andy Hyslop	Rockfax	2006

### Robin Ashcroft

The first of Robin Ashcroft's two guidebooks, *Britain's Alpine Ridges*, is a scrambling/climbing guide cross that covers routes in Snowdonia and the Lake District. The Lake District selection includes many well-known scrambles, but also one or two definite rock climbs such as Needle Ridge on Great Gable – hence its inclusion here.

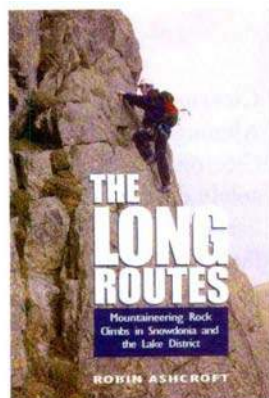
The idea of a guide detailing a selection of long “mountaineering” routes (up to Hard Severe in standard) is a good one, but his second book, *The Long Climbs*, is slightly let down by its large hardback format (totally unsuitable for tucking down a tee-shirt).

In addition, both these books contain unfortunate howlers of the sort that might leave one wondering just how accurate the descriptions are! Jack's Rake is called Jake's Rake in the *Ridges* volume, whilst *The Long Routes* opens with



a first sentence that refers to Walter Parry Haskett-Smith as William, and then compounds the error with a chapter on Bridge's Route, Esk Buttress, that names it as Bridger's Route (sic) throughout.

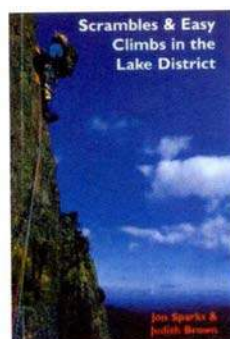
For some strange reason both these books were distributed in the USA by Trafalgar Square, an organisation specializing in British books. One imagines that the interest must have been fairly limited. This fact is mentioned here only because these are sometimes referred to as being published by Trafalgar Square, which they weren't.



Britain's Alpine Ridges (paperback)	Robin Ashcroft	Crowood Press	1996
Britain's Alpine Ridges	Reprint		1998
The Long Routes – Mountaineering Rock Climbs in Snowdonia and the Lake District	Robin Ashcroft	Mainstream Publishing	1999
The Long Routes – Mountaineering Rock Climbs in Snowdonia and the Lake District	Reprint (paperback)		2005

### Grey Stone Books

Grey Stone Books published a number of walking guides to the Lake District, mainly written by the editor Ronald Turnbull. Whilst scrambles guidebooks are not covered in this review, the guide listed below is different in that it includes a considerable number of recognized rock climbs up to V Diff in grade.



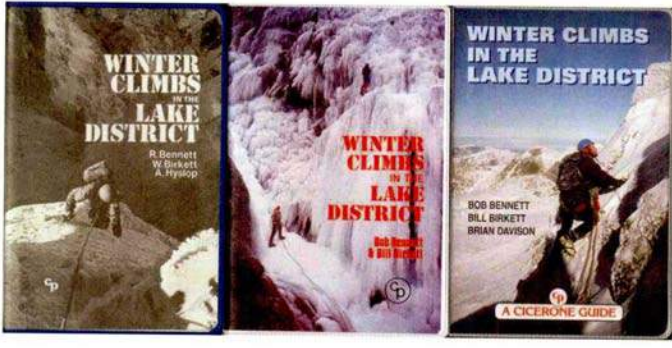
Scrambles & Easy Climbs in the Lake District (paperback)	Jon Sparks & Judith Brown	Grey Stone Books	2003
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## WINTER CLIMBING GUIDEBOOKS

### Cicerone

Although many of the above guides include references to winter climbing, the Cicerone guide, *Winter Climbs in the Lake District* (1980), was the first guide solely devoted to Lakeland winter climbing. Bob Bennett's earlier work, published by the Wyndham Mountaineering Club (see above) formed the basis for the first edition. The fact that it went into production at all was largely due to the severely inspiring winter of 1978/9. The third edition has been updated by Brian Davison, and is the first that has attempted to be fully definitive. It also includes a list of first known ascents much of which was supplied by Colin Wells and Mike Cocker. The FRCC's failure to document the history and descriptions of Lake District winter climbs remains a source of puzzlement to many of its members, particularly as the first winter guide was allegedly offered to the club by Bob Bennett – and turned down, though neither editor at the time can actually remember this! These guides have a plastic cover except where noted otherwise.

More recently Rockfax have pioneered the development of downloadable "Mini-Guides" which consist of a PDF file that can be printed out on a home computer. One of these covers winter climbing and is listed in topos section above.



Left: The three editions of Cicerone's winter guides. The reprints had identical covers to their editions.

Winter Climbs in the Lake District	Bob Bennett, Bill Birkett & Andy Hyslop	Cicerone	1979/80
Winter Climbs in the Lake District	Reprint		1981/82
Winter Climbs in the Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Bob Bennett & Bill Birkett	Cicerone	1985/86
Winter Climbs in the Lake District 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed	Reprint		1987
Winter Climbs in the Lake District 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed. The third edition contains a note stating that the first edition was reprinted in 1985 – however this seems to be an error.	Bob Bennett, Bill Birkett & Brian Davison	Cicerone	1997
Winter Climbs in the Lake District 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.	Reprint (card cover)		2004
Winter Climbs in the Lake District 3 <sup>rd</sup> ed.	Reprint (card cover)		2005

## IN CONCLUSION

Reading between the lines above, it seems apparent that innovation in our climbing guidebooks has on many occasions been stimulated by outside influences rather than the FRCC. Perhaps this is as it should be: it is after all usually the “angry young men” who ring the changes in climbing as in other things in life, and there is no reason why they should not do so in guidebook production as well. There is no doubt that they will always be a force to be reckoned with, but, as they seldom stay young, angry or committed for long, they never seem destined to be the threat to FRCC supremacy that they might initially appear. Perhaps instead they should be considered a power for good, making us keep, if not one step ahead of, at least up with, the game. There have also been periods of dynamic editorship when great innovations have arisen from within the FRCC and have made its guidebooks leaders in their field, and indeed, initiators of change elsewhere.

Ultimately it should never be forgotten that what success has been achieved is due in the main to the sustained voluntary efforts of guidebook writers, diagram drawers, editors and all the other anonymous members of the Guidebooks Sub-Committee over the last three-quarters of a century. Their work has most certainly not been in vain and the FRCC has a record of guide-

book production to be proud of. I am glad to report that the Club shows every sign of remaining the major force in the production of Lakeland climbing guidebooks, and its guidebooks have long been, and continue to be, numbered among the best in the country.

Stephen Reid, September 2006

### **Acknowledgements**

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following without whose help this article would have been far less accurate: Ian Angell, David Armstrong, Robin Ashcroft, Martin Bagness, Bob Bennett, Max Biden, Bill Birkett, Sir Chris Bonington CBE, John Burrows, Greg Chapman, Peter Checkland, Roger The Lord Chorley, Geoff Cram, Doug Elliot, Harry Griffin, Joe Griffin, Julian Heaton Cooper, Peter Hodgkiss, Chris Hollett, Alan James, Alan Jones, Ron Kenyon, Ray McHaffie, Des Marshall, David Miller, Bob Moulton, John Parker, Al Phizacklea, Colin Read, Paul Ross, Gwylim Satchell, Mike Thompson, Colin Wells, Nick Wharton, Iain Whitney, John Wild, John Wilkinson, Ken Wilson, Stuart Wood, Tim Wood. At the same time I must emphasise that any errors are mine, not theirs. My apologies to anyone whom I have inadvertently omitted.

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- Book Review - A Climbers Guide to Borrowdale, Pillar Mountaineering Club Journal 1965-66.
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- Editorial, Rocksport June/July 1969.
- Rock Climbing in the British Isles 1894-1970 - A Bibliography of Guidebooks, George Bridge, West Col Productions, 1971.
- The Guidebook Question, Terry Sullivan, FRCC Journal 1976.
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- A Century on the Crags, Alan Hankinson, JM Dent & Sons Ltd, 1988.

## CLIMBS OLD AND NEW

*John Holden*

The following pages are cribbed almost exclusively from the FRCC Website at <http://www.frcc.co.uk/rock/newroutes/index.htm>, so the credit for this information should go to Steve Reid for all the hard work he puts in to maintaining the site.

The pace of developments on our crags has continued unabated, though it has to be said that the focus has been on smaller outcrops. Route lengths of below 10 metres are becoming commonplace. That combined with some long approaches will inevitably mean that many routes will never see a second ascent (whatever their merits may be!).

The information contained here is very selective. Major new routes, almost all done by Dave Birkett, are covered, and for the rest, there is a selection of climbs of various grades that may prove interesting to jaded climbers seeking something new. Al Phizacklea has continued to beaver away, BJ Clarke seems to have visited every part of the District, John Temple isn't quite sure of where he was (but the climbing was good) and Steve Reid has virtually taken over development of Pillar.

Something of a novelty for *Climbs Old and New* is the inclusion of new winter routes, though heaven knows when it will be possible to repeat them!

### **LAKE DISTRICT LOOSE ROCK WARNINGS BORROWDALE - GOWDER CRAG**

Tragically, on 17th June 2005, a huge block came out killing the climber who was leading the top pitch of **Fool's Paradise**. There is still much loose and dangerous debris in the vicinity, in fact the whole buttress seems to be getting looser, and climbers are strongly advised to avoid the climb, if not the crag.

### **LANGDALE - RAVEN CRAG WALTHWAITE**

Rock at the bottom of the corner-groove of **Walthwaite Crack** (aka Yosemite Crack) has become unstable. A small rockfall had occurred recently leaving two highly unstable blocks which fell out as Jim Loxham passed them by – no one hurt, but it does raise the question as to how safe the rest of those large blocks jammed at the base of the corner are. It is possible to climb the route without touching the blocks, but not without approaching from directly from below.

### **GABLE CRAG**

The huge, poised blocks forming the top pitch of **The Jabberwock/Unfinished Arête**, and part of **The Tombstone** are in a very dangerous condition!





If one "pops" it'll be not only dire for the team involved, but for anyone on the approach scramble!

## NEW ROUTES

### SCAFELL

#### East Buttress (p86)

##### Return of the King 27m E9

(6c). Climb the blank wall between *Overhanging Grooves* and *Welcome to the Cruel World*, trending right near the top. Very fingery climbing on small edges. D Birkett (unseeded), 3rd June 2006

Some gear preplaced the day before including a crucial wire at the half way stage. Remainder placed on the lead.

#### Piers Gill Crag (page 132)

##### Mazurka 23m S

Takes the rounded buttress just right of *The Watchtower*. Start immediately right of that climb.

(4a). Climb a short wall (optional) then straight up the rounded buttress to a ledge. Two successive scoops on the left lead to the top.

BJ Clarke (solo), 29th April 2006

##### Muffin Crack 20m VD

Start 13 metres right of *Sweat Tea* below a juniper-carpeted alcove at 3 metres. Gain the alcove and climb the crack above. Step up right and finish up the short wall.

BJ Clarke (solo), 29th April 2006

##### Canaan 20m S

Start 4 metres right of *Muffin Crack* at a steep brown rib, 2 metres left of *Extra Route*.

(4a). Climb the rib to a ledge, then move up left to follow a shallow groove.

Finish up the short arête on the right.

BJ Clarke (solo), 29th April 2006

##### Armoanium 12m HVS

The main feature of the right-hand side of the crag is a wall split by a ramp with a prominent overhang. Start below the overhang at a short wall, 5 metres right of *Extra Route*.

(5a). Up the short wall via the layback flakes to reach the ramp. Pull over the overhang (unprotected) then move right to finish up the left side of the arête.

BJ Clarke (solo), 29th April 2006



**KIRKFELL****Boat Howe Crags (p111)****Breakwater Slabs****Groyne Strain 26m E1 \*\***

Excellent climbing, well protected, Ennerdale's answer to *Aphasia*! Start as for *Grooved Arête*, at the top of a large block.

(5b). Step delicately left to reach a small triangular niche, then smear leftwards to gain a higher recess in the slab. Follow the thin crack directly, moving left where it eases to an easier finish.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 3rd June 2006

**Sea Shanty 10m E1**

(5b). The short arête right of *Grooved Arête*, climbed on its right side, which has an awkward finish.

A. Phizacklea, J. Holden, 3rd June 2006

There is an excellent abseil block at the top of *Sea Shanty*, which can be utilised for all the *Breakwater Slab* routes.

**Main Buttress****The Golden Rivet 38m. HVS- \*\***

Supercedes the earlier line of *Starboard Arête Direct*, which was originally described as a MS giving poor climbing on loose rock. It makes you wonder whether *S.A.D.* had ever been checked, certainly the rock on this wall is excellent!

1 14m (4c). Follow *Scenic Cruise* to where it traverses right at 6 metres. then climb the straight crack system to the grass ledge.

2 24m (5a). Climb the flake-line up a shallow rib above to where the rock bulges, then step down and traverse across the wall on the right to the edge overlooking the top of the gully. Pull steeply up the left edge of the rib and finish directly.

A Phizacklea, J Holden, 3rd June 2006

**West Buttress**

The following line climbs up the broken looking upper left end of the *West Buttress*, it was chosen because it stays in the sun until early afternoon. The rock on the first pitch is tremendously rough.

**Bowspit 34m HVS**

Start off a grass ledge, left of a short side gully cutting into the *Main Buttress*,



below the left-hand arête. Spike belay.

1 10m (4a). Climb the slabs delicately to a ledge, pull over a bulge to a higher grass ledge.

2 24m (5a). Use the rib in the left to reach the obvious undercut and pull out left to a flake. Traverse onto a ledge on the left, and follow a steep mossy groove for 4 metres (Friend 1) where a footledge leads back right to the arête. Climb this on a series of superb jugs to the top.

J Holden, A Phizacklea (Alt), 3rd June 2006

## GABLE

**Gable Crag** (p120)

**Marie Celeste** 34m MVS 2006

Good climbing up the groove and slab just right of *Windy Ridge*. Start as for that climb.

1 20m (4a). Climb the rib on the right of the right-hand, open grassy groove to a sloping ledge on the left. Move right and follow the steep shelving groove, using holds on its right wall, to a good ledge.

2 14m (4b). Step right to below a recently created, pink-hued slab. Up the crack in the slab, past the overlap (crux), to a short rib leading to easier ground. Scrambling leads to the descent rake on the right.

BJ Clarke (solo), 3rd June 2006

**Troubadour** 15m MVS 2006

Just left of the start of *Inca Grooves* is a fine steep wall. This worthwhile little pitch takes its right arête. Start 3 metres left of *Inca Grooves* on a higher ledge.

(4b). Climb directly up the arête, finishing up the hand-sized crack.

BJ Clarke (solo), 3rd June 2006

**Cerca Trova** 62m VS 2006

A good find, giving sustained climbing up a series of cracks in the right side wall of *Sledgate Ridge*. Start one metre right of the easy chimney start to *Sledgate Ridge*.

1 20m (4b). Climb the thin crack and rib to a ledge. Follow casier slabs and walls to reach a small triangular grass ledge, just below and right of a short crack with a pinnacle at its base.

2 12m (4b). Step left, and climb the short crack and the fine, scooped wall above to gain the large terrace below pitch 3 of *Sledgate Ridge*. Scramble up right to a large flake on the right edge of the wall.

3 14m (4b). The proper way may be up the chimney on the left, but this is perennially mossy! So, to continue the theme, clamber over the flake and

hand-traverse rightwards onto the side wall, from where, thin cracks and a wider crack above lead to a ledge with blocks.

4 16m (4a). Climb the groove on the left, then follow easier grooves slightly to the right, to reach the top of *Sledgate Ridge*.

Scramble up for 30 metres to reach the *Easy Sheep Walk* descent route. Either follow this to the top of the crag, or descend it to the foot of *Engineer's Slabs*.  
BJ Clarke (solo), 3rd June 2006

## ENNERDALE

### Pillar Rock (p56)

#### High Man East Face

#### Over the Jordan 24 m E1\*

Start from the highest point of the gap, immediately left of *West Jordan Climb* at a short crack.

(5b). Climb the crack and step left to a slab. Go boldly up this into a steep groove to the right of the groove of *West Jordan Crack*. Climb the groove exiting it rightwards by a right-slanting crack.

C King, SJH Reid, 8th July 2005

#### Deep River 45m MVS 2006

An interesting, especially for the second, arching traverse of the central section of the *South Face of High Man*. Start 3 metres above the two jammed blocks of *East Jordan Climb* at a steep rib.

1 22m (4a). Climb the rib to a sloping ledge, then swarm up the wide crack on the left (*Central Jordan Climb*), to a stance on the gangway finish of *Jordan Bastion*. Huge flake belays above.

2 23m (4b). Descend the gangway for 4 metres to a crack, and step down. Cross the delicate slab on the left to reach the "difficult" crack of *West Jordan Climb*, and descend this for 2 metres to the top of the scoop. Traverse leftwards across the "bold" slab of *Over the Jordan*, with a final step down to reach the steep crack of *West Jordan Crack*, and finish up this.

BJ Clarke (solo), 6th June 2006

#### J.K.C. 26m HS 2006

Takes the wall above the *Slab of Slab and Notch Climb*, to finish up *The Arête*.  
1 10m. Climb the *Slab*, and go up the corner to a grass terrace. Belay at the horizontal crack.

2 16m (4a). Climb the wall directly above the horizontal crack to reach the stacked blocks on the *Pendlebury Traverse*. Gain the crest by climbing the

fine, crinkly wall on the left, and continue to the top.

BJ Clarke (solo), 6th June 2006

### **Shamrock North Face**

#### **Graviton 147m HVS\* 2005**

A companion route to *Eros* – and of similar character, taking the fine arêtes to the left of that route. Start by scrambling 60 metres up the *Great Heather Shelf* to the foot of a clean groove on the left (*Photon*). Alternatively, reach the same point by climbing a route on the *Lower Tier* and descending down the *Great Heather Shelf*.

1 20m (4c). Climb diagonally across the left wall of the groove to gain the left arête. Go boldly up this to a slight break and continue up the arête until it eases. Down climb the grassy chimney on the left to a stance at the foot of another arête.

2 30m (4b). Climb the crack just right of the arête to a small ledge. Gain the arête and follow it (hidden wires on right) to a groove which leads to a stance.

3 40m (4a). Climb the broken grassy wall to an easy arête overlooking *Shamrock Gully*. Follow this and climb a cracked slab round to the left of the smooth diamond-shaped wall to regain the arête which is followed to a stance.

4 25m (5a). Climb up a couple of metres to the left of the steep wall of the final tower, then traverse one metre left along a grass ledge and climb boldly up the first shallow groove which is followed to the crest of the ridge.

5 30m. Easier climbing along the ridge to the *Tea Table*.

SJH Reid, C King (alt), 12th May 2005

#### **Photogenic 104m E2- \*\* 2005**

The fine arête on the right of *Photon's* pitch 2 is the main aim of this climb.

1 26m (5a). Start up a short scoop right of *Shamrock Chimney*, and follow the slab above, slightly right at first, then back left, until a traverse can be made left under a square-cut overhang to reach a belay in *Shamrock Chimney* at the foot of the arête.

2 28m (5b). Move up leftwards on the arête and climb it on excellent rock.

3 30m (5b). Climb the short rib just right of the grassy gully until a step right leads back onto the other rib. Move up and right, to a grassy recess, a few metres below the big grassy ledge, where a bold traverse right can be made across to the left arête to reach the belay just above.

4 20m. Traversc along the ridge to the *Tea Table*.

Pitch 2 C King, SJH Reid, 8th July 2005, Pitches 1 and 3, A Phizacklea, JL Holden, 10th July 2005





## Low Man West Face

### Mirror, Mirror... 70m E2\*\* 2005

An out there, "on the wall" experience, with such pesky distractions as runners kept well below the absolute minimum on pitch 2. Take several thin slings and a cool head and start as for *Nook and Wall Climb*.

1 33m (5b). Step left onto the wall and move left into the chimney which is climbed to a terrace. A narrow rightward-slanting grassy ramp is followed until moves can be made straight up the wall to gain a standing position on a blocky projection. Sidle round the arête and up to easy slabs and trend left to belay in a leftward facing corner at the top of *Appian Way* pitch 1.

2 30m (5a/b). Step 1 metre left from the corner and climb straight up the wall on incuts to the traverse break of *Appian Way* (spike runner on left, and gear in crack above). Step right to the left-hand end of a slim overhang and move up through the bulge (wire). Climb boldly up the wall above, firstly rightwards, then leftwards on good holds (but with no gear) until finally a good spike runner allows breathing to resume just below the steeper headwall. Climb directly through the headwall to a crevasse stance.

3 7m. Climb the blunt arête above the stance. A good spike belay can be found by scrambling some 20m further up.

Chris King, Stephen Reid, Jonathan Preston, Karen Wigglesworth, 11th June 2005 (main pitch only).

Top-roped once prior to leading.

Pitch 1 added by Chris King and Stephen Reid on 10th May 2006.

### Auld Lang Syne 52m HS \* 2006

This climb makes the most of the delightful clean white rock under the *Old West Route*, well to the right of the other climbs on the *West Face of Low Man*. The climbing is fairly straightforward but protection is scarce. Begin at the start of the *West Wall Traverse*, at a rightward-slanting rib.

1 35m. Climb the rib, then a wide crack to a ledge on the right of a slab. Step up left onto the slab and puzzle your way up it to easier rock which leads to a grass terrace and block belay at the foot of another slab.

2 18m. Step off the block and climb the slab by its right edge. Continue up the easier slab above to belay on the *Old West*.

Stephen Reid, Sally Baxendale, Richard Tolley, 7th June 2006

West Face of High Man

### Rib and Rib Climb 90 m E1\*

An eliminate style series of variations on *Rib and Slab* giving great climbing on fantastic rock. Unfortunately the protection on pitch 1 is poor and this pushes it up a grade. Start as for *Western Trod*, at the foot of a great right-







slanting pale rock intrusion, just a couple of metres below the start of *Rib and Slab*.  
 1 30m (5a). Follow the intrusion for 5 metres to a short shallow wide chimney. Step leftwards onto a rib that is just right of the groove of *Rib and Slab* and climb the rib to a jagged overhang. Step left onto *Rib and Slab* and go up a few moves to place an inadequate selection of paltry protection. Traverse horizontally rightwards onto the overhang and pull over it and follow the rib to the stance at the top of pitch 1 of *Rib and Slab* below a short V-groove. Climb the wall to the right of the groove and go up a few metres to a stance on the *New West*, just below a small square roof. A bold pitch, but never desperate.

2 36m (5a). Climb a slim groove to the left of the roof, (just right of the groove of *New West*), until good jugs on the right wall allow a traverse rightwards above the roof to the arête. Follow the arête to gain the traverse on *Rib and Slab*, then climb diagonally leftwards up the fine slab to its left edge before bold moves up rightwards allow the arête to be regained. Follow it to the pile of blocks below. A great pitch.

3 24m (5a). Step out leftwards of the top block and make a fingery hand-traverse onto a nose on the left. Continue the traverse leftwards round into a slim groove and climb this to join the finish of *Rib and Slab* (straight up).  
 C King, S Reid (alt), 10th July 2005

### **Spire Crag** (160 114 Alt 700m North facing)

Not named on the maps, it's so called because it faces Steeple, across Mirk Cove.

The crag is 120 metres northeast of the summit of Scoat Crag, on the steep headwall of Mirk Cove, and 100 metres left of Scoatfell Crag. (On the 1:25000 OS map, it is just above the "8" of spot height 841 of Scoat fell).  
 Approach – From Ennerdale, take the path as for *Scoatfell Crag*. From Wasdale, either follow Nether Beck all the way past Scoat Tarn to the top of Scoat Fell, (6.5 km), or take the Mosedale path directly to the same point (5 km) Both of these approaches take about 2 ½ hours. From the summit of Scoat Fell, walk 150 metres east towards Pillar until the dry stone wall ends abruptly at a crag. Below here, a cairn can be seen on a boulder, scramble down to this cairn, and drop down left for another 50 metres to the top of the crag. The top has an excellent picnic ledge, and the routes are reached by abseil – take a few long slings. The crag is a slab of immaculate rock that provides phenomenal friction, the rock is naturally clean and did not even require wire brushing. This seems remarkable for a high north-facing crag. There is more rock to the left of these slabs for future development.

The routes start from a grass ledge below the main slab – this is a few metres above the scree.

**Spire Route** 23m VS \*

Start at the upper left end of the grass ledge

(4b). Climb the right-hand side of a large block and pull right into a shallow corner, where a superb hand-traverse right is made to reach a crack in the centre of the wall above. Climb this past a spike and finish up a groove line.

Variation MVS (4a). Instead of hand traversing to reach the crack, pull up to a ledge and tiptoe across to the crack. Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 11th June 2005

**Inspired Slab** 24m E2 (E3)? \*\*Immaculate rock, with a thin crux, where a skyhook was comforting. Start in the centre of the ledge, just left of a big corner.

(5c/6a?). Climb a short right-facing groove to a grass ledge. Move up to the base of a recess and pull right to a crack and pod which leads past a scarred nut placement to an overlap. Pull over this to a nut on the left, then climb diagonally right with difficulty to finish up a short crack.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 11th June 2005

**Fred Dibnah, Steeplejack** 24m E2 (E3)? \*

Another fine route with a thin crux, climbing the slabs left of the big corner of *Spiral Stairs*.

(5c/6a?). Pull onto a grass ledge and follow a thin short crack to a nut out right. Climb the crozzly wall above the crack (spike on right) and move into a slight depression, where a step right enables a variety of dubious wires to be fixed. Follow the thin crack to the top, finishing just right of *Inspired Slab*.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 11th June 2005

**Spiral Stairs** 22m S \*

The pleasant corner line, starting at the foot of a large block.

Climb the lower flake to grass ledges and follow the groove to the top.

John Holden, Alan Phizacklea, 11th June 2005

**Perspire Crack** 15m E3 \*\*

Excellent thin climbing up the crack in the wall starting from a higher ledge above and right of the other routes.

(6a) Pull up using a small flake to climb the thin crackline – it's thin and sustained all the way, a skyhook protects the initial moves, thereafter the gear is good.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 11th June 2005

**BUTTERMERE****Grey Crag** (page 82)**Mitre Buttress****Mitres Well** 20m E1+ / E2

Two contrasting pitches, starting from below the triangular cave at the top of pitch 1 of *Mitre Buttress Ordinary*.

1 9m (5a). The striking thin crack to the left of the roof. Gain this from the corner on the left, toe-traversing to the crack just above the roof. Superb jams lead to the ledge. Move left onto the blocky ledge, and re-belay just left of the wide crack of *Mitre Buttress Direct* top pitch.

2 11m (5b). Climb the crack to a small ledge (last runners) below the steepening. Pull over a small roof to a finger ledge and traverse left to a jug in a small recess. Finish up a vague groove above, past a small wire.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 6th May 2006

**Ribbon Wall** 26m VS

Start on the ledge below the wall, right of the first pitch of *Mitre Buttress Direct*. (4c). Climb blocky flakes on the left to a thin horizontal flake, and pull up right to a small spike. Continue to a small protruding flake and move up to a shallow corner which leads to a belay on *Mitre Buttress* Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 6th May 2006

**Chockstone Buttress****Grey Sombrero** 50m HS

An interesting but wandering line, following the ridge just right of the gully bounding *Chockstone Ridge*. Start up *Sauviter*.

1 27m. Follow *Sauviter* to the crack on pitch 2, then traverse left to a good spike on the arête. Move up 2 metres, then traverse left across a steep wall to a ledge and small wire belays.

2 23m. Move left to the ridge overlooking the grassy gully, and follow this directly over several steps, finishing up a short steep groove.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 6th May 2006

**John Major** 26m HVS+ / E1

Good climbing, a little dirty at the bottom.

Start between *Sauviter* and *Lucky Strike* (5a, maybe 5b?).

Climb a crack which runs into a recess in the overlap, and pull over using a dubious hold to the traverse of *Sauviter*. Step right (tiny spike) and climb the crinkled wall to a crack and ledges above, then follow the V-groove and twin cracks of *Grey Wall* to the ledge. Climb the centre of the headwall to finish.

Alan Phizacklea, John Holden, 15th April 2006

**NEWLANDS****High Spy Crag (?)**

This crag lies somewhere high above *Red Crag* and is best reached by descending a gully north of the summit cairn of High Spy. The rock is superb.

**Stella on Speed 40m VD**

Follow the rib rising from the gully bed.

John Temple, November 2005

**Gippereiter was KGB 60m VD/S**

Start at a gentle ramp to the north of *Stella on Speed* and climb the steep wall to finish almost at the summit.

John Temple, November 2005

**Hey, Hey, CIA D 30m**

Start at a small pillar further north again. Climb leftwards to a rib, then right to a chimney-crack.

John Temple, November 2005

**LANGDALE****Lightning Crag (p266)****Chilly Chimney 18m MVS**

The chimney bounding the left side of *West Wall* (just left of *Fat Boys' Crack*) is harder and more interesting than it looks.

(4b). Climb the chimney and finish up the right edge of the easy angled right-slanting slab on the right.

SJH Reid, C King, 17th November 2005

**Gotama Left Hand Start 16m VS \***

Follow *Ghandi* to the ledge and then traverse delicately right along the lip of the roof to join *Gotama* and finish up this. Better than the original route

SJH Reid, C King, 17th November 2005

**DUDDON****Wallowbarrow Crag (p201)**

Far East Buttress

**Paradise - Venables Variation:** Climb the steep crack direct to a heathery finish (VS 4c/5a).

Steve Venables, SJH Reid, 16th November 2005

**EASEDALE****Deer Bield Crag (p295)****Deer Bield Crack XS**

Deer Bield Crack has been re-climbed! The huge central groove leads to an exquisite off-width crack. Start at the top of the old buttress which is now part of the rubble on the scree slope. Start at an obvious diagonal hand crack that leads into the groove proper. Climb the groove and make a swift exit onto the left wall at a thin crack. A further groove and flakes lead obviously into the main crackline. Get in there and fight! Serious.

Mick Lovatt, Steve Wilcock, Tim Whiteley, 16th October 2005

*Comment from the Editor: A serious rubble-covered route fringed with many tons of hanging death (I should know - I abseiled down it once!). Should perhaps be renamed Deer Bield Groove?*

**MUNGRISEDAL****Carrock Fell - The Trough Area (p173)****Eighty Foot Slab**

Barry Clarke suggests: Good rock, a mere 10 minutes from the car and basking in the early morning sunshine. Time for a reappraisal?

**Smearing on Sunshine 16m VS**

Nice, but lacking protection.

(4b). The line of the slab, taking a shallow groove just right of the central mossy scoop. Step right to avoid the rounded bulge and continue up slabby walls to the top.

**Dawn Crack 16m S**

(4a). The indefinite crack and slabby walls at the right edge of the slab, gained from a high heather ledge.

**Dawn Rib 14m VD**

Climb the shelving wall and rib 6 metres up and left of *Smearing on Sunshine*. All re-ascended and named by BJ Clarke, 10th February 2006

**BORROWDALE****Dove's Nest Slabs (p285)**

Forty-five metres below *Blue Circle Buttress* a huge pointed boulder sits in the scree. A few metres away stands a small buttress with a square-cut roof at 5 metres.

**Echo Beach 9m VS**

Start at the right-hand side of the buttress.

(4c). Climb the shallow groove formed by a rock flange, exiting delicately. Unprotected; but it should be possible to bail out by hurling oneself into the grassy gully!!

BJ Clarke (solo), 2nd February 2006

Forty metres above *Concrete Slab* is yet another slabby buttress; characterized this time by a curving overlap and a slanting oblong-shaped block at its base. (Perhaps it should be called *Barry's Buttress!*)

**Arctex Amble 14m S**

Start at the foot of the oblong block.

1 7m. Climb the front face of the block and step up to a terrace.

2 7m (4a). Climb the slab above via a thin seam to finish up a flake-filled crack. Pleasant.

BJ Clarke (solo), 2nd February 2006

**Stucco Slab 10m S**

Start below the curving overlap at the highest point of a grass ledge.

(4a). Climb the slab direct, finishing up the groove formed by the overlap.

BJ Clarke (solo), 2nd February 2006

**Nippy Sweeties 14m MVS**

Start below the right-hand arête of the buttress containing *Stucco Slab*, 5 metres below and right of that climb.

(4b). Climb the slabby left-hand side of the arête directly to the top.

BJ Clarke (solo), 1st March 2006

**THIRLMERE****Castle Rock of Triermain (p126)****South Crag****Sursum Tuus 100 m E1**

A left to right girdle. Surprisingly independent and with plenty of interest, low in the grade and not sustained. As with all traverses, care is needed to protect the second. Start 10 metres left of *Chapel Cracks*, at the left side of a multi-stemmed tree, above which is a prow of rock.

1 12 m (4a). Climb up the right side of the prow, passing a stunted tree, to reach a ledge. Climb the steep wall above to a sapling belay.

2 20 m (5a). Traverse right, step up onto a platform. Gain, and traverse rightwards along, the slabby shelf, into the corner of *Chapel Cracks*. Make an awkward move down to a ledge. Traverse straight across the wall on the

right, into the obvious corner, move down and enter the chimney on the right, climb up it into a rock crevasse, belay. Junction with *Scoop and Crack*.

3 12 m (5b). Step right into the groove, move right and up, pull round onto the steep slab of *Green Eggs & Ham*. Move right and climb a short steep wall to gain runners in the narrow groove above on the left (to protect the second). Traverse right across the top of a groove and pull out right to a belay (junction with *Gazebo*).

4 20 m (4b). Move up and traverse right along a rock foot ledge, to gain and climb a rightward rising crack line to the arête (junction with *Kleine Rhinne*). Step round onto the slab and bridge across the top of the corner, pull out right to tree belays on *Yew Tree Climb*.

5 36 m. Step right and up, before making a slightly rising traverse rightwards across the wall, to gain a spike runner just above the gangway on *Gangway Climb*. Traverse right across the wall to gain the top of the slabs and traverse these just beneath the steeper headwall to the foot of the short steep corner of *Slab Climb*, move right and climb the pleasant clean wall rightwards to the top. From the foot of the short steep corner of *Slab Climb*, the traverse can be continued across a little vegetation onto the final rocks of *No Name*. Then continue to the extreme right edge of the crag!

G L Swainbank, C Read (alt), 29th August 2005

Pitch 1 is still rather scruffy, but should improve with traffic. The name implies the attitude required if attempting this on a busy day.

## COLD STUFF

### WEST

**Scafell - East Buttress** (p40)

**Mayday Direct Start 20m XI (10)**

Follow the summer line of *SOS*.

David Birkett, Mark "Ed" Edwards 20th March 2006

Succumbed only after multiple attempts by both climbers. In theory one could now climb the whole of May Day Direct as a winter line via this start.

**Scafell Pike** (p43)

**Southern Cross IV 145m \***

Essentially a direct line on *Southern Corner*.

The climbing is more in keeping with the first pitch of that route. It provides a direct line up this part of the buttress, climbing the groove immediately left of *Slanting Groove* on pitch 2.

1 40m (4). Start as for *Southern Corner*, and climb the initial groove of that

route. Where *Southern Corner* moves rightwards, continue up and slightly left to a good ledge beneath a steep wall.

2 30m (5). Climb the wall for 3 metres until it is possible to move left around the edge. Trending leftward into an open groove and climb this to where it steepens beneath another rock wall and belay.

3 25m (5). Climb the wall above for a few metres, then move rightward via a series of cracks to gain a precariously perched block, just below the right arête. Follow the arête to good ledge, and belay where *Southern Corner* comes up from the right.

4 50m (3). Follow *Southern Corner* to the top of *Pulpit Rock*.

Nick Kekus, Sarah Kekus. 4th March 2006

**Gable Crag (p55)** - These routes are listed from left to right, not right to left as in the winter guide.

### Late Season Flurry 200m II

The main feature is the narrow gully immediately left of *Aaron's Slab*. An interesting easier route which gains from its impressive surroundings. Start up the gully just right of *Windy Ridge*, but move right and climb the left edge of a buttress until almost level with the top of *Windy Ridge*. Follow a ramp up to the right, then traverse right to gain a gully line (80m). A short ice pitch and mixed ground lead to the foot of *Aaron's Slab* (25m). Go left into the icy gully and follow it past another short ice pitch to an upper amphitheatre (25m). The ramp on the right leads to the summit slopes (70m).

BJ Clarke (solo). 19th March 2006

### Lingmell (p49)

#### Antarctic Monkeys 220m? II/III

This route takes the gully line north of Straight Gill and south of the ridge with a prominent pinnacle at one third height.

Climb easily up the widening gully to a small amphitheatre with a corner on its right. Avoid this corner by climbing turf on the left, then traverse back right into the main gully. Climb easily until the gully forks. Take the left fork up steepening turf, then onto steepening ice until the gully widens near the top. Follow broken ground to the plateau. Belays as you find them.

Harry Worsnop, Matthew Balmer. 17th March 2006

This route was climbed solo, so the length is a bit of a rough guess! The climb would become slightly easier if banked out with snow. This route may well have been climbed before but we couldn't find any record of it.

**Direct Start:** Once in the small amphitheatre climb the icy corner direct. III/IV (depending on level of icing). H Worsnop. 17th March 2006



**Black Crag, Scafell (p42)****First of Many III/IV \***

The route mainly consists of frozen turf and mossy grooves coated with ice/snow and the odd tricky rock section which were climbed by using the turf above. First crux pitch is well protected. Pitches 4 and 5 were very run out.

1 35m. Follow the obvious groove, hard at first, to gain the leftwards-slanting turf groove which traverses to a large belay ledge. Poor anchors.

2 30m. Climb the wall behind the belay to a large stepped groove which goes, first leftwards, and then rightwards, to a large ledge. Bomber belay.

3 30m. Climb the short awkward corner behind the belay and move easily to a left-slanting snow rake leading to a good belay in a large bay.

4 40m. Climb the weakness in the wall behind the belay to gain a groove system which is followed for 30 metres to a poor exposed belay.

5 45m. Step left into another groove which narrows at about 15 metres, and which provides some thin moves before the groove funnels out and is followed to the top of the crag. Good Belay.

Will Sim, Ed Booth (alt), 30th November 2005.

**NORTH****Great End Area (p71)**

These routes are situated on the buttress above the Left and Right Branches of *Central Gully* (can descend Right Branch to get to it).

**Grand Finale 50m VI (7) \*\***

Climb parallel cracks in wall on crest of buttress, pull into a groove at mid-height and follow this to top.

Stephen Ashworth, John Kelly, Feb 2006

**Untitled 50m V (6)**

Start 5 metres left of Grand Finale.

Pull into a groove and follow this, exiting over a turfy bulge into another groove. Follow this and its continuation to a tricky exit.

**EAST****Dollywagon North Crag (343 132)****Solo Symphony 50m III**

Start 10 metres right of *South Gully*. Climb the rightwards-trending ramp for 10 metres. After passing the obvious fault, climb the wall on the left to gain a ledge then make an awkward step left (crux) onto another ramp. Follow this

briefly then step left again over a block (possible belay). Countour round to the right and up to gain a short icy corner, then follow easy ground to the top, bearing right (away from *South Gully*).

Harry Worsnop, 25th February 2006

### **Dolly Daydream 50m III**

This route is comparable to *Dolly Mixture* in terms of grade and quality, it also requires well frozen turf. Right of *Ramp It Up*, the crag turns around a prow with a steep clean wall on the right. Right of this wall the ground rises and there is a groove which becomes larger higher up the crag. At its base there is normally a small ice weep. Start up this, and follow the ramp above rightwards to a steep corner. Climb this with difficulty to a ledge, move left and climb the icy corner. Follow the obvious line above trending left to finish above the steep wall.

David Bell, Ross McGibbon, 26th February 2006

### **Tarn Crag & Falcon Crag Area (p153) – Cock Cove Crag (349 129)**

#### **Ramp Route Direct 40m V (6)**

A direct and sustained line up the crag. Start in the first obvious turf groove just right to the start of *Ramp Route*. Climb this to rejoin that route in the upper groove.

Mark Thomas and Chris Esoll, 20th March 2006

#### **Equinox 45m V (7)**

Start under the big roof 5 metres left of *Turf Corner*. Climb the corner in the back of the recess to under the roof. Traverse right using overhead torques in the roof crack, to pull out on small hooks and turf. Move right up a turf diagonal ledge to join the upper finish of *Turf Corner*. N.B. Take care with the loose flake as you pull out of the roof, it sits on the left above the roof.

Mark Thomas, Chris Ensoll, 20th March 2006

### **Hutable Crag (p160)**

#### **The Memo 100m II**

Follow the right hand side of East Hutable Gully. The route steepens at mid-height and can be easily joined there from the gully. From this point, 60m of steep heather and turf lead to a short rock corner. Interest is maintained and warthogs are recommended. Easier ground above leads to the top.

Ross McGibbon and David Bell, 5th March 2006

**SOUTH****North Buttress, Bowfell** (p114)**Ribioletto Groove - Cambridge Crag Start** 140m V (6)\*\*

Start 10 metres left of the spout at the foot of the cliff, in a vegetated open corner just left of the ramp that runs right. Climb this up and over into a recess with a corner in the back bounded on the left by a smooth wall. Climb this and exit right and up over an awkward niche to a snowy bay. Head right to a short corner, then step up and right again to a belay on a large snow ledge. Move left into a corner, mantle a turfy step and balance up to hook frozen moss and thin turf (size 1 nut and RP). Pull over the top and traverse right towards *Ribioletto*, passing behind a gendarme. Belay to the right of *Ribioletto Groove*. Climb the groove passing under the jammed block! Continue to the summit.

Mark Thomas, Dave Browne, 19th March 2006

**The Gnomon** 70m VII (8)\*\*\*

Climb up to the belay of the summer route *The Gnomon* and follow it to the top of the crag.

Mark Thomas, Dave Almond, 16th March 2006

**Cambridge Crag/North Buttress Girdle** Several hundred metres IV\*

A left to right girdle crossing level with top of first pitch of *Sword of Damocles*, and with a sting in its tail. It takes an obvious line.

Stephen Ashworth, Brian Davison (solo, except for last move!), 15th March 2006

**Bowfell Buttress** (p116)**Bowfell Buttress Girdle** 100m VI (6)

A left to right girdle crossing *Bowfell Buttress* below the summer crux.

Stephen Ashworth, Brian Davison, 15th March 2006

**North Buttress, Bowfell** (p114)**Ribioletto Groove** 55m VI (6)

The turfy groove/chimney to the right of *Ribioletto* is surprisingly steep. Climb the groove, passing a large wedged block. Above this the groove narrows to a chimney. Thrutch up this, and make some hard moves to gain the turfy continuation groove. Step right and climb a short steep corner to gain easy ground.

Adam van Lopik, Sarah Normington, 5th March 2006

**Gimmer Crag** (277 070)

**The Crack:** This was climbed in winter conditions by Wil Hurford in the 70s. They started via the first pitch of *Hiatus*, and then followed the summer line for the final two pitches. Repeated under heavy snow conditions by David Birkett and Mark "Ed" Edwards, 13th March 2006. The party climbed the initial groove direct to a few moves short of the *Bower* where the summer line was rejoined. Grade is VII (7,8,7)\*\*\*.

**Pavey Ark** (p124)**Gwynne's Chimney IV** (5,2)\*\*

David Birkett, Mary Birkett, Mark Edwards, 14th March 2006

Repeated the following day by Mark Thomas (solo) with direct finish and reckoned it to be IV (4) and 1star.

**Direct Finish 30m IV** (4)\*

Climb the chimney to the small tree, but don't move right, continue up through the narrow gap to good turf and exit.

Mark Thomas (solo), 15th March 2006

**Flat Crag** (p113)**Mary Ann 40m IV** (5)

Two contrasting pitches with a slight variation to the summer line on the first pitch. An excellent winter line that could be climbed as one pitch.

1 20m. Climb the turfy crack for 6 metres and traverse left along a small ledge to reach another turfy groove at the left-hand edge of the overhangs. Climb the slab direct and pull through the fault. Belay as for the summer route.

2 15m. As for the summer route.

Recorded by Chris Stirling and Patrick Cave, 12th March 2006 but done previously by Brian Davison, 1999.

## **IN MEMORIAM**

**SUE COURCHEE**

**DAVID COOK**

**IAN DIXON**

**BILL ECKERSALL**

**TONY FROST**

**WALLACE GREENHALGH**

**ARTHUR HARRY GRIFFIN**

**KENNETH HIMSWORTH**

**DAWN HOPKINSON**

**JOHN JACKSON**

**W.R. (BILL) PERROTT**

**ROY PRECIOUS**

**JOAN AND ERIC RAMSBOTTOM**

**JAMES RICHARDSON**

**THE REVEREND CANON CHARLES RICHARDSON**

**ALAN ROBERTS**

**DERRICK ROBINSON**

**ERNEST SHEPHERD**

**GORDON CAMPBELL SAYER**

**MISS P.M. WATERWORTH**

### **SUE COURCHEE**

Teacher, singer, outdoor enthusiast, environmentalist; born Feb 11th 1937, died July 12th 2005.

Sue was born in mid-Wales, went to school in Presteigne and then to London University, to read biochemistry. Whilst engaged in research at Cambridge she met Dick, then studying engineering and a keen mountaineer. They married in 1962 and two years later moved to Eskdale, where Dick worked at the Outward Bound Mountain School and Sue accepted a teaching post in Cleator. Sue developed a strong interest in outdoor training, giving invaluable help on Outward Bound staff training expeditions to the mountains and rivers of Scotland. She was a notably effective organiser, and enjoyed supporting the various hair-raising adventures of those halcyon days.

It was natural for her to apply for the Club and she was elected in 1965. She loved the conviviality of the huts and was frequently to be seen at Birkness or Brackenclose, cooking for a group after a full day out walking or biking or sup-

porting others on mammoth trips such as the Bob Graham Round. Membership of the Club helped her to widen her horizons and take up new challenges and some of her most ambitious alpine hut tours were when she was in her sixties.

Following her retirement from teaching in 1995, Sue and Dick returned to Cumbria, where their house in Lindale became a home-from-home for a multitude of adventurers and travellers, drawn there in large part by Sue's legendary hospitality and generous cooking! She became involved in organising the Lake District Mountain Trial, the unique annual mountain race originated by Harry Griffin in the 1950s, eventually becoming President of the event. She was active until the very end, and died on a biking tour having spent her last day on the Isle of Eigg.

"She leaves tonight from Euston,  
By the seven thirty train,  
And from Perth in the early morning,  
She will see the hills again.

She'll ride up o'er Drumochter,  
And we'll all be her guest,  
When she gets off at Inverness,  
And sets out for the West"

*(Unattributed)*

Roger Putnam

## DAVID COOK

David's death at 80 years of age brought to an end a life-long enthusiasm for the Lake District and its mountains

David was introduced to our sport at an early age through his father, Dick Cook, a past President of the club, and his climbing friends mainly from the Fylde area and David, in his late teens, settled into Club life both with us and the Preston Mountaineering Club.

Whilst never missing an opportunity to rock climb, David was happiest fell walking and ridge climbing. These activities were mainly centred in the Lakes and Scotland although he spent much time in the Spanish sierras.

Dave was a self-employed accountant and despite the tragic accidental death of a young daughter his happy-go-lucky nature always shone through. He lived variously in Kendal, Preston, Spain and latterly in the Rossendale area. All these changes caused him to lose touch with the Club, but not with his love of the fells and his abiding love of the Lakes has been passed to his son Roger

On these occasions there is one thing that sticks in the mind – a wonderful climbing holiday in the Spanish Encantados range where Dave drove

five of us in an old Humber Super Snipe. I recall the car meeting its end in the bowels of the car ferry where it was abandoned to the crew. Perhaps it was buried at sea?

Tom Meredith

## IAN DIXON

Ian's interest in hills was kindled by school holiday visits to an elderly aunt in Keswick. The horizon of a teenage schoolboy in those car-less, war years, was largely governed by the range of the Fell Farer's weekend bus from Carlisle. He managed to get further by gaining school sponsorship for a spell at Eskdale Outward Bound school – where Eric Shipton made a big impression on him. Leaving school meant the start of 2 years of National Service most of which was spent in Trieste.

Just before his call-up he managed his first visit to the Alps, with a school friend, travelling by train to Chamonix. They alighted at a station to get a drink and saw the train, plus their gear, disappearing in the distance. After eventually retrieving the situation, they managed to lose a wallet and documents on Mont Blanc. Tending to have more than his fair share of unwelcome incidents, this phenomenon became known as the "Dixon Luck".

A cathedral scholar from an early age was probably instrumental in striking up a firm friendship with his Army Padre, who introduced him to the local Alps and also to his lifelong passion for grand opera. He then went to teacher training college in Durham, which also resulted in meeting his wife, Dorothy. Ian was then glad to return to his roots in Carlisle. There he resumed his choral career, both with the cathedral and the local musical society, where he sang leading parts in their productions for many years.

He joined Carlisle Mountaineering Club and was also a very active member of a local Masonic Lodge. He managed to fit in a teaching career, being a very popular and dedicated teacher. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to take school parties to outdoor activity huts in the Lake District, to foster their interest in the hills, as his had been.

I was at school with Ian and our paths converged again when we were about 25 years old. I had recently become fixated on the Scottish Hills. This began a lifetime of wandering the hills with Ian in the Lakes and Scotland with forays to the Alps, Atlas and Corsica. We did nothing of note, but had at least our fair share of adventures and hairy moments. This revealed a companion who proved utterly dependable in any situation. Eventually he endured the scourge of Parkinson's disease and its complications for a long time, with an uncomplaining fortitude. The circle was fittingly completed when his ashes were scattered from Friar's Crag, in his beloved Borrowdale.

Alan Scott

**BILL ECKERSALL**

Bill was born in Bury, Lancashire where he first started exploring the outdoors. He started climbing on gritstone in Derbyshire then during the war he spent most of his leave from the RAF climbing in Snowdonia and Scotland. He even once climbed with WH Murray in Snowdonia soon after the end of the war. He had several Alpine seasons in the postwar years and then later enjoyed introducing his family to the Alps. He joined the FRCC in 1942 and was an enthusiastic member attending many meets, in his later years as a fell walker rather than a rock climber. He particularly enjoyed the Scottish meets, and after his retirement spent many summers exploring the North West of Scotland. He spent many happy New Years at Bectham Cottage, and attended several snowy February gatherings at Milchouse in the Cairngorms. As well as walking Bill enjoyed bird watching, fishing and skiing. Latterly he was unable to drive which curtailed his activities though he managed to get out for a walk most days rain or shine! He has two daughters who continue the family tradition - Chris Kenyon (member FRCC) and Gill Irvine (third female member SMC who just happens to live next door to Kam House!)

In December 2003 Bill moved to Aviemore to be nearer to Gill, where he settled in well with views of the mountains from his sitting room window.

He was very pleased to meet up with old friends when he visited the Spean Bridge meet in May 2004. He died suddenly in June 2004.

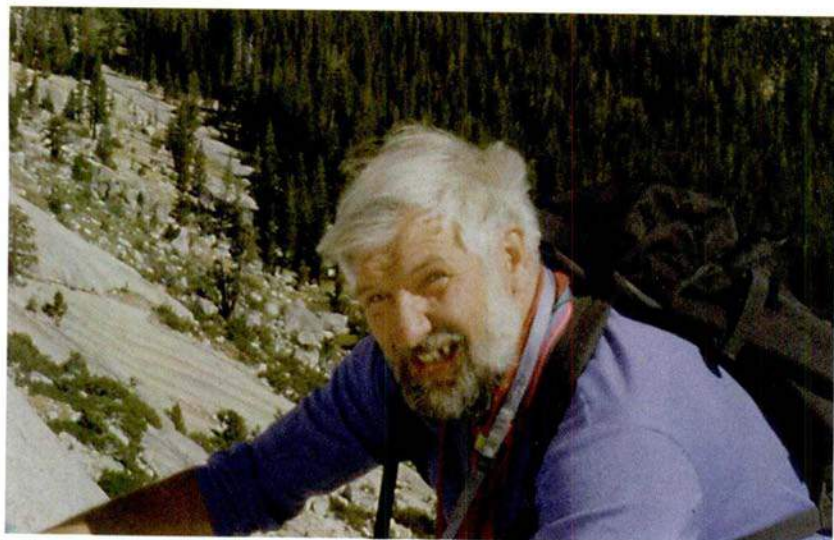
Chris Kenyon

**TONY FROST**

Tony Frost, who died after a short illness, understood better than most people the substance of mountains and outcrops. Born in the West Yorkshire coalfield, in one of the dense cluster of mining villages between Doncaster and Barnsley, Tony trained as a mining surveyor and knew the difference between the grit and other rock strata of his home county, because he had spent years tunnelling through them. Perhaps this contributed something to his enthusiasm for outcrop climbing, despite the fact that his massive frame did not lend itself naturally to steep and often brutal crack climbs on the Derbyshire edges and Yorkshire outcrops. On slabs he was very good, and the long reach helped. He was steady rather than spectacular. He had great balance and strength, but he was also a big man and as he would often reflect, his was a lot of weight to lift on his fingertips

Tony brought to his climbing all the qualities that characterised his life: determination, diligence, strength, good humour and a sense of proportion. Climbing was important to him, but as an activity that complemented his many other interests. He was a great companion in the mountains: he would discuss





politics, faith, history and contemporary society, with a well argued view of his own, but with an appreciation of other people's differing values and opinions. Although he was critical of the acquisitiveness of modern society, and felt strongly about the social and economic decline of mining communities in the eighties and nineties, there was nothing angry about him: he lived his life as he thought life should be lived.

Tony taught mining surveying, in Doncaster and then at Tuson College, Preston. The move across the Pennines enabled a long-held enthusiasm for Lake District mountains and rock to be more easily accessed. His idea of a great day would be Grendel, Beowulf and Hrothgar on Scrubby Crag, midweek on a warm day in June, with not a soul in sight. He spent many climbing and family holidays at Buttermere and some successful seasons in the Alps, going to the Bregaglia, the Dauphiné and around Monte Rosa. A more recent high point in his climbing travels was a trip to Yosemite.

It seems particularly cruel that someone who had never smoked, who took regular exercise and who did all things in moderation, should be brought down by a sudden and incurable illness. But even in this Tony was resilient and uncomplaining. Only a week before his death, he was more bothered about the trouble he was causing than he was about himself.

At Tony's funeral, Fulwood Methodist Church was packed with relatives, friends, climbing partners, his former students and neighbours. Tony is survived by his wife Veronica and their son and daughter, Robert and Helen. His ashes were scattered close to Gimmer Crag.

Michael Burt

## WALLACE GREENHALGH

Older members will remember with affection a tall, white-haired figure with 'pebble' glasses looking every inch the serious scholar, an appearance rather belied by the smile and the twinkle in his eyes. In fact, Wallace, more usually Wal as his many friends knew him, was a man of many parts, as much at home racing through a Ximenes crossword or playing a tricky hand of Bridge as writing a meticulously researched and often humorous article or, with even more enthusiasm, scrambling over fells and rocks with a camera at the ready to take some superb pictures. He lived his life as fully as he was permitted and achieved success in virtually everything he tackled.

Wal died on 23 February 2005 aged 83. He had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for many years, becoming progressively more immobile with associated loss of sight and many of the faculties most of us just take for granted. His mental faculties, sense of humour and concern for friends and the world in general remained largely unimpaired and he was uncomplaining both about the suffering he must have felt and the raw deal fate had given him.

A typical product of Manchester Grammar School, brilliant in his work and interests and a lifelong reader of the Guardian, Wal won an Exhibition to Clare College, Cambridge where he took a First in Classics before leaving for war service with REME in 1941. Here he rapidly showed his versatility and a remarkable skill with radio and all things electrical, reaching the rank of Major before demobilization in 1946. He toyed with the idea of a career in the civil service but, fortunately for the many students who afterwards came under his influence, he spent a further year at Cambridge to take a Certificate in Education. A satisfying teaching career, first at Bridlington School then, as Senior Classics Master, at Cheadle Hulme School followed and it was at the latter that he met Enid who, as his wife, was to be his constant companion and support for the rest of his life. When the arthritis became severe and he had to take early retirement, Wal and Enid moved permanently to their delightful bungalow in Broughton in Furness where they continued to pursue their interests particularly in art, local history and Lakeland in all its facets.

While still at school Wal found a friend with kindred interests in the mountains in Edward Wormell and together they continued through Cambridge and the Fell and Rock to share a passion for the mountains and Cumbria in particular. Wal was a member of the Club for 62 years and Assistant Journal Editor from 1962 to 1969. He was a voluminous writer of both personal diaries and articles for the Journal but it was two such of the latter that he contributed to Cambridge Mountaineering which marked him out as a writer of distinction and revealed much of his character. The first, All Fools' Ridge, describing a winter traverse of the Aonach Eagach Ridge by a moonlight which eventually disappeared was so graphically written that it was seized upon by the Swiss

Alpine Club to appear, in translation, in their journal as 'a typical example of British mountaineering' (!). The second, *The Hills are Waiting (A Defence of Not Climbing)* amply explains the author's awareness of his own limits in climbing aspirations as exemplified by the occasion on the Matterhorn when he turned back from just below the summit, ostensibly to escort a weaker member of the party down but, as he admitted, also because he was just not good enough himself to continue.

Such was the man, honest to himself and the world, a great companion who enriched the lives of so many of us. Our deepest sympathy goes to Enid for whom his devotion was complete.

John Cook

### ARTHUR HARRY GRIFFIN

Harry Griffin, an honorary member of the Club, was 93 when he died in July 2004. His long career as a professional journalist began when, as a teenage reporter on the *Barrow Guardian*, he asked for an interview with the Mayor of Barrow, George Basterfield, "to talk about rock climbing". George took the young Harry on his first climbs, on Dow Crag, starting his lifelong love of the Lake District crags and hills, and introduced him to the Club, which Harry joined in 1933.

Harry climbed or skied in Scotland, the Alps, the Rockies and the Himalayan foothills. He climbed with many of the great climbers of the day, including George Sansom, C F Holland, Ivan Waller and Jim Birkett. He was leading climbs until the age of 78, and carried on skiing until he was over 80. He did most of the long-distance fell walks and in the late 1950s took his son Robin on the first father-and-son traverse of the Cuillin ridge.

During the Second World War he served in the Far East in the Intelligence Corps, rising to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. He had married Mollie in 1937; after the war they lived for 50 years near Kendal, bringing up a son and a daughter while he worked as Northern Editor of the *Lancashire Evening Post*. Mollie died shortly after their Golden Wedding, the first of several grievous losses which he was to suffer: his second wife Violet died only four months after they were married; his son Robin died suddenly at the early age of 58; and he lost the partner of his later years, Josie Clegg, in 2003. Despite these bereavements he would still agree with me that he was fortunate to have lived such a long, active and productive life, and still be able to walk up on to Kendal golf course from his flat, and look at the fells.

To all who love the Lake District Harry Griffin has left a rich and varied legacy. As one of *The Guardian's* country diarists he contributed every other Monday for over 53 years. He died in harness; the last piece, about his first and favourite mountain Black Combe, appeared on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2004. The diaries, origi-

nally published with the reversed initials GAH until the newspaper decided to reveal its contributors' names, show the breadth and depth of Harry's knowledge of the District, embracing Lakeland life, its people, history and society as well as its dales, lakes, crags and fells throughout the seasons. He never missed a deadline. Every piece was taut and polished, the work of a gifted writer. The best have been collected by The Guardian in *A Lifetime of Mountains*, published in September 2005.

Harry has written more about the Lake District than anyone, "including Wainwright". His first book *Inside the Real Lakeland* appeared in 1961, and ten others followed, the last of these in 1990 being a collection of Country Diary pieces and dedicated in memory of Mollie. All are entertainingly and carefully crafted, bringing pleasure to Lakeland lovers all over the world. Then came his twelfth *The Coniston Tigers* in 1999, a splendid autobiography and a living history of Lakeland climbing. If you want to know the man, read this.

I first met Harry in 1955, when he gathered together a group to develop an annual mountain race which the YHA had been organising since 1952. Thus began The Lake District Mountain Trial, which aimed, in his words, "to encourage among fellwalkers and mountaineers the highest possible standard of safe navigation and fast traverse of difficult mountain country". He persuaded the Lancashire Evening Post to sponsor the event, and devoted much time and energy, as Chairman and later Life President of the newly-formed LDMT Association. The Mountain Trial, now in its 54<sup>th</sup> year, is an ongoing legacy.

Harry Griffin was appointed MBE in 1996, "for services to literature and the Lake District".

John Lagoe

## **KENNETH HIMSWORTH**

A key figure in the national parks movement, he protected the Lake District for nearly 30 years

Mixing innovation with opposition to harmful development, Kenneth Himsworth, who died aged 92, was the most important local government officer in the development of national parks in England and Wales. As chief officer of the Lake District national park for 27 years, and clerk of Westmorland county council for 23 years, he was also crucial in the establishment of an independent authority in the Lake District.

The Lake District provided, at Hassness in Buttermere, the first guest-house established by a national park authority, and the first visitor centre at Brockhole. In the 1970s, Kenneth vigorously supported the upland management scheme which paid farmers to carry out environmental work, and was a model for environmentally sensitive areas. At the same time, he was implacably opposed to the erection of overhead electricity lines in sensi-



Kenneth Himsworth

tive locations, and to afforestation proposals which would have changed the Lake District landscape.

Moves to increase water abstraction from the lakes were defeated, notably at Ullswater in 1962, with the help of an intervention from Lord Birkett in the House of Lords. In 1976, the Commons environment subcommittee, endorsing Kenneth's policies, highlighted the effectiveness of the Peak and Lake District planning boards.

Kenneth had also pressed for national park authorities to have power to make bylaws, and that was included in the 1968 Countryside Act. One result was that, on 20 lakes and tarns, motor-driven vehicles were banned, and, subsequently, 10mph speed limits were imposed on Derwentwater, Coniston Water and Ullswater.

Kenneth was born in Carnforth and educated at Lancaster grammar school and Pembroke College, Cambridge. He joined Westmorland county council as a solicitor, becoming the deputy clerk in 1948 and clerk in 1950. He remained the county's chief officer until Cumbria was created in 1974.

The Lake District became a national park in May 1951, and Kenneth was appointed its chief officer. The National Park Authority became an independent body in 1974, and Kenneth its first national park officer, as the chief executive was called.

He retired in 1978 after 27 years as leader of the park, and the then director of the Countryside Commission, Reg Hookway, commented that Kenneth had tended his board "as a good Lakeland shepherd looks after his flock of herdwick, and even the wayward among them, who may have had ideas about leading the flock away from the national park, have been quietly, and with subtlety, brought back to the fold".

Kenneth's many other posts included that of Clerk of the Peace in Kendal (1950-74), chairman of governors of Lancaster grammar school (1981-90), secretary to the Mary Wakefield music festival, held in Kendal, for more than 10 years and a deputy lieutenant in Westmorland, and then Cumbria.

A member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, he walked extensively - and at great speed. His last ascent of Helvellyn was at the age of 83. After retirement, he was also vice president of the Friends of the Lake District.

Without Kenneth's dedication, national parks today would be much less effective organisations, and the Lake District a much less attractive place. He was appointed a CBE in 1971 for his work in local government.

Kenneth married his wife, Ethelberga, in 1943. She died in 1995, and he is survived by their three children, Christopher, Eldred and Katherine.

Kenneth Stephenson Himsworth, local government officer, born October 2, 1912; died August 9 2005

John Toothill

*This obituary first appeared in The Guardian on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2005 and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor.*

## **DAWN HOPKINSON**

Dawn died in December 2005 after living with and fighting cancer for two and a half years.

Dawn was born in Malvern in 1946 and her early life was spent in the Medway towns area of Kent. At school swimming was her main interest and she swam for Kent. She trained as a PE teacher in Brighton and after a short period of teaching in Erith, spent a year working in children's theatre before moving to Egremont to teach PE again. It was here that she developed a life-long love of the Lake District, especially the west side, and began climbing.

I met Dawn at Matlock where she was retraining in "special needs" teaching. We were both in our mid 20s. Dawn was already an experienced mountaineer and rock climber. In spite of stressful full-time jobs, we found lots of time to climb. Dawn rose through the ranks of "special needs" teaching to deputy head of a special school and then head of a centre for adults with learning difficulties, before going into management.

Dawn climbed rock, ice and mountains all over the UK and Europe as well as the States, South America and Kazakhstan. She had completed many classic climbs in the Lakes, Wales and Scotland, as well as a good selection of the alpine 4000 metre peaks. Dawn was an accomplished rock and ice climber leading HVS rock routes as well as seconding grade 5 ice climbs. She was also a keen skier and fell runner and whilst never fast, she got great satisfaction from completing the classic Lake District fell races.

She achieved all of this in spite of a number of injuries that would have finished the careers of less determined people and she approached her cancer in the same way: it was not going to stop her getting out into the hills, doing things and meeting people. Dawn was also very good at encouraging other people to climb, especially women who often lacked confidence.

To describe Dawn's achievements in the outdoors only tells "half the story", as most people who met Dawn would agree and some of her qualities are aptly described in this extract of words from her funeral celebration, written by her close friend Philippa Larkam: -

"Dawn was an extraordinary person and it was not clear quite how extraordinary, until she embarked on her struggle with cancer. It was for her like getting up a mountain, or completing a race, or hang gliding – her tenacity was awesome.

It is clear to me that the word that sums up Dawn is 'inclusive': she hated anyone to be left out in a crowd, not aware of a new philosophy, hearing the latest joke or feeling unheard. She loved nothing more than being in the

company of people who had all felt involved, because of her skill, to make them all feel welcome, all having a laugh.

The wisdom that Dawn has left a lot of us with, is her ability to sow a seed in us, about who we are, which she would ask you about from time to time and it feels that we who were helped on our road have changed direction as a result of Dawn's help."

She did not allow the cancer to stop her always being concerned about the welfare of others, or becoming involved in other things. This included being a founder member, with 6 other people with cancer, of the Challenge Cancer Through Adventure Charity. She raised a lot of money for this charity and gained a lot of publicity, with a hang glider flight 6 weeks before she died.

So what a great life cut short. In that life she touched and influenced many others and I feel honoured and privileged that she chose to spend the last 30 years plus of that life with me.

Many miss her, especially me.

Richard Hopkinson.

## JOHN JACKSON

John's lifelong enthusiasm for mountains began as a young boy after attending a lecture by Howard Somervell, an event he was delighted to recount to Howard when, after the successful Kangchenjunga expedition, he and Charles Evans were chief guests at the 1956 Annual dinner. By the time he was 13, he had begun rock climbing at Widdop, the gritstone crag just a few miles over the moors from his home in Nelson. With his elder brother Ronnie, he soon discovered the greater crags of the Lakes, Wales and Scotland. There were some hair-raising exploits as Ronnie, a fine and powerful climber, particularly in nails, often preferred to solo routes and John was obliged to follow.

At the outbreak of war, John left his job as trainee pharmacist, to join the RAF. After 2 tours of operational flying in the Burma campaign, John was seconded to the RAF Mountain Centre in Kashmir as chief climbing instructor, training air crews and airborne troops. It was in Kashmir that he had his first experience of big mountain climbing and made many ascents of peaks of 4,500 – 5,800 m including some new routes of a high standard.

I met John (or Jacko as he was affectionately known by his friends) at Widdop in 1945 on his return from the Far East and for several years we spent a lot of time together on gritstone, the Lakes and Skye. We joined the Fell and Rock together that year, proposed by Ronnie and David Jackson. In 1947, together with Harry Ironfield and Ken Heaton we had our first Alpine season, climbing in Arolla and Zermatt. The high spot was an epic ascent of the Ferpècle Ridge of the Dent Blanche with John suffering from a raging toothache and Harry with acute altitude sickness. A late start and poor route finding resulted



in a bivouac on the summit. We made it down the South Ridge to the Cabane Rossier just ahead of a severe storm which swept the peak for many hours.

John had to return home from Zermatt in order to start a course to train as a teacher. On qualifying he taught at schools in Nelson and Redcar, where he was an early President of the Cleveland Club. In 1952, he got leave of absence from school to become a member of the British North West Garhwal Expedition to the Central Himalaya where he made the first ascent of Avalanche Peak 6,400m and several smaller peaks. He also fitted in a quick visit to his old haunts in Kashmir where he climbed Kolahoi. Other expeditions followed in quick succession. He was first reserve for the 1953 Everest Expedition and in 1954 was the mountaineering leader of the press-sponsored Himalayan Yeti Expedition to Sola Khumbu. Although no yetis were observed, he managed to climb 6 peaks of 5,800 – 6,400 m. including the second ascents of Pointed Peak and Kang Cho Shar. He then made what he later described as the most memorable journey of his life. When the expedition returned home, John together with a few Sherpas made the first traverse from the Everest base camp by way of Makalu to Kangchenjunga. This was a 250 mile trek taking 20 days which threaded in and out of Tibet and Nepal crossing passes of 5,800 – 6,600m en route. At Tseram in the Yalung valley, he met up with his brother Ronnie, a member of the 1954 Kangchenjunga Reconnaissance Expedition: he had been 29 hours on his feet but still looked fresh and very fit. They returned together to Darjeeling along the Singalila Ridge. In 1955 John was a member of the team which made the first ascent of Kangchenjunga. With Tom McKinnon he established Camp V at 7,750m carrying loads without oxygen. First ascents of two 6,000m outlying summits of Forked Peak were also made.

Since the 1950s John's quest for mountain travel and adventure took him back to the Himalaya on numerous occasions, climbing and trekking in Ladakh, Kashmir, Garhwal, Nepal and Sikkim. His last visit was a trek in 2002 along the Singalila Ridge from Darjeeling accompanied by family and friends. For almost 60 years, John was mainly a Himalayan traveller, interested in the people, their way of life and the variety of Himalayan environments but climbing peaks whenever possible. The crossing of high and often new passes he found to be just as fulfilling as climbing a peak.

Over the years, many other great mountain ranges were visited. He was a member of John Hunt's 1960 expedition to North East Greenland and the 1963 Trans-Pindus Expedition to Greece. He also climbed Kilimanjaro and Point Lenana on Mount Kenya and led treks throughout the Himalaya, Peruvian Andes and many other locations. He was a dedicated skier with extensive experience in Europe, particularly in the Dolomites, Greenland, Canada, Cyprus and the Himalaya.

In 1957 John left the teaching profession to become Chief Instructor at the National Centre for Mountain Activities at Plas y Brenin run by the Central Council for Physical Recreation. Two years later he became its Director, a post he held until he retired in 1976. He was then invited to develop the National Outdoor Centre for Wales at Plas Menai near Bangor and was its first Principal.

John was a great communicator and was well known on the lecture circuits of Britain, Europe, USA, Canada, the Middle East and India. He was a frequent contributor to the *Fell and Rock Journal* and the *Himalayan Club Journal*. His book *More than Mountains* was published by Harrods in 1955. He was Editor of the C.C.P.R. publication "Safety on Mountains" and co-author of *The Climbing and Trekking Guide to Kashmir 1945*, revised and re-edited in 1976. He was an Honorary Member of the FRCC, the Himalayan Club, The Mountain Club of North Wales, the Mynydd Climbing Club and the Chester Mountaineering Club.

In his later years, his mountain activities were limited to some degree by arthritic hips, one of which had been fractured by an avalanche in Garhwal many years earlier but remained undiscovered until it showed up on the X-rays prior to a hip replacement. John was a great companion on the mountain and a pleasure to be with at all times. I have many happy memories of our days on the hills together, not least at our Widdop reunion at Harry Ironfield's home in Threlkeld in the 1990's. John will be greatly missed by his many climbing and trekking friends and particularly by his wife Eileen and sons John and Robin who shared many of his mountain activities.

John Wilkinson.

### **W.R. (BILL) PERROTT**

I first met Bill in Roorkee, India in 1946. I was working in the Bengal Sappers HQ when he arrived as a newly-commissioned officer straight from leave, trekking in Kashmir. He was wildly enthusiastic about a peak called Kolahoi, a beautiful peak though very small by Himalayan standards (5425m). He knew I was interested in mountaineering, and invited me to join him and four friends from the trek in an attempt on the unclimbed N. Ridge. He and two of the others were posted to Malaya, and I as the most experienced mountaineer left (some rock-climbing in the Peak and Wales and a lot of reading!) became leader. The steep rocky N. Ridge was an impossibly ambitious target for six, let alone three; I reached the summit with a Sherpa by the E. Ridge.

It was a short acquaintanceship but it led to a lifelong friendship. He never talked much about his life, except about the very happy year in his late teens spent climbing in the Lakes, a year which influenced, I believe, the rest of his life. He came to Dublin in 1942, and started climbing with some friends of own his age, including his future wife, Stella. They climbed on crags near Dub-

lin, mostly single pitch, at Dalkey Quarry, on Bray Head and on a stack on Ireland's Eye. They were all new routes of course and many of them are still classics. They formed an Irish Mountaineering Club with Bill as Secretary, but it soon disintegrated as most of the members left Dublin.

Bill and I met again when I came to Trinity College in Dublin in 1948. We climbed together that autumn and then wrote to the Dublin papers to try to resuscitate the IMC. We were successful; there was a packed meeting and in January 1949 there were more than sixty members.. Always an enthusiast, it was Bill's drive as Secretary that got the Club started and kept it going; teaching beginners to climb, nailing boots, editing the first Journal, he did them all.

As his family grew and as work difficulties increased he could give less time to the Club and to climbing, though his interest never waned. Finally, like many others (including the writer) in that sad jobless decade, he and his family had to emigrate. They went to Canada and settled in Calgary where he had a successful career in business. He enjoyed walking and camping with his family in the Rockies, and I used to receive regular letters about these trips. In return he always wanted to know what was happening in Irish climbing. He came back to Ireland for several short visits, but didn't climb. I realise now that for many years he was struggling silently against the painful stomach illness which finally caused his death. I was aware of his illness, but only his family knew of the pain he went through.

His time in the Lakes was tremendously important to him, as his continued membership of the Fell and Rock shows. He named a dozen Dalkey climbs after Lakes' ones – but be careful, the Dalkey Gwynne's Chimney is a strenuous VS! Irish mountaineers owe him a great debt as founder of the first mountaineering club in Ireland, progenitor of a thriving sport. The Fell and Rock can certainly claim some credit in the birth of Irish mountaineering.

He was a delightful companion on the hills, his conversation seasoned with little good-natured digs.

Joss Lynam

## ROY PRECIOUS

I first met Roy towards the end of 1956. Both of us were recently released from our stints of duty serving as National Service men in the RAF.

In those days, we had a small local group, who spent weekends climbing and walking in the Peak District and it was on one of these weekends that a tall, slim man joined our group – this was Roy. He was very quickly accepted by our group as a very worthy member – he had a motorbike with side car, although the side car was usually replaced by boards (more people and gear could be carried that way).

The Peak District remained our main 'stamping ground' but with fairly frequent visits to the Dales, Lakes and Wales. The Dolomites were visited in the late 50s. and early 60s. where we climbed routes on the Vajolet and Sella. We had one memorable day on the Adang Kamin (the route has since fallen down). As Roy was leading the first pitch, a German climber knocked a considerable amount of rock off, which shot down the groove Roy was climbing up. A well placed overhang saved the day for Roy (and myself) and taught a Teuton how to swear properly. We caught the German and his Dutch companion up and had a friendly joint ascent of the remainder of the climb.

Roy visited many places in various countries of the world, with Norma, such as Norway, Iceland, Canada, Morocco, New Zealand, as well as mountain areas of Europe. He also ventured into the Himalaya where he climbed to over 20,000 ft.

But Roy will probably be best remembered on hill days in the Lakes and especially on the Scottish 'Geriatrics' Meet, better known as the Scottish Hotel Meet where he always seemed to know everything about the hills, consequently always finding the best way, although he often put an extra 'little' loop on the walk towards the end.

We heard of Roy's death whilst on a club meet at Newton Stewart in Galloway in April 2004. So ended many years of companionship on the hills.

John Loy.

I got to know Roy during the early 1960s when I resumed activities with the Peak Climbing Club after the birth of my 2 daughters Valerie and Anne. Roy and Norma were always around when, as a young family, we joined the Peak Climbing Club on camping and hostelling holidays mainly in the Lake District, North Wales and Scotland. He was a pillar of strength to us all and we remember him particularly for his ability to recount funny stores and the humorous way in which he dealt with day-to-day activities. In addition to climbing with my husband Ron, he, together with his wife Norma, organised interesting walks wherever we were. We have so many memories of happy days spent in his company.

Eventually Roy became a member of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club, served on the Committee and was elected as a Vice President. He attended the Scottish Hotel meets on a regular basis and indeed led several, where his knowledge of the Scottish hills proved invaluable. He travelled extensively abroad with Norma visiting Nepal, Ladak, New Zealand, Canada and many of the Alpine areas of Europe. His love of the Derbyshire countryside was always very important to him and after retiring he and Norma became very active members of the local branch of the C.H.A.

His life's love was being in the mountains and all types of countryside with Norma and his friends. His Sheffield friends miss his presence greatly as I am sure do many members of the Fell & Rock Climbing Club. Our sympathies go to Norma in her sad loss.

Madge Townsend.

### JOAN AND ERIC RAMSBOTTOM

I first met Joan and Eric when we came to live near Ulverston in 1967. They had married in 1946 after Eric returned from active war service in Italy and other parts of the Mediterranean. They came to live for many years at The Cragg, an old traditional Lakeland house at Colthouse near Hawkshead on the slopes of Claife Heights before eventually having to move late in life into Hawkshead itself.

Eric joined the FRCC in 1962 and Joan in 1967. They were active and enthusiastic members and Eric (helped by Joan) was assistant warden of Salving House for some 4 years. Eric was born and brought up in County Durham and Joan in Yorkshire. Both, early in their lives, became lovers of the outdoors and mountains. They spent a lot of time in the hills and enjoyed fell walking in both the Lake District and the Highlands of Scotland, which they visited regularly. While primarily a fell walker, Eric also became interested in scrambling and rock climbing in the Lakes and Skye. He was also a fisherman. In her professional life, Joan was a teacher and taught at Kelsick Grammar School in Ambleside and later at John Ruskin School in Coniston, where she served as Senior Mistress. Eric worked for the Freshwater Biological Association at Ferry House on Windermere and was the author of a study published by them entitled "Depth Charts of the Cumbrian Lakes".

Both Joan and Eric were excellent photographers and Joan developed a talent for painting mountain landscapes. Eric died on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 2005 aged 88 and Joan 4 months later on 9<sup>th</sup> September, 2005 aged 86. They are buried high in Hawkshead churchyard with an outlook to Claife Heights and The Cragg.

Brian Blake

### JAMES RICHARDSON

James Edward Richardson, formerly of Brigsteer Road, Kendal, died at Summerhill Nursing home on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2004 aged 102.

Mr. Richardson was, at the age of 24, appointed managing secretary of Kendal Co-operative Society, a position he held until his retirement 41 years later, despite having been head-hunted by larger societies at Cardiff and Wolverhampton.

An active member of the Fell and Rock Climbing Club, his love of the Lake District kept him in Kendal. A lifelong member of the Religious Society of Friends, and a trustee of the Bryan Lancaster Trust, his interest in charitable work led to him being involved with voluntary housing, being a member of the committee, and later Chairman of Kendal and District Housing Society, together with Thornyhills Housing Association, and the mayor of Kendal's Homes for the Aged.

Further Quaker charitable work followed when he was appointed a member of the Ackworth School committee of West Yorkshire. He served the society locally as treasurer of Kendal and Sedbergh monthly meeting and registering officer from 1952 to 1976. In 1934, he was appointed a magistrate and served for 38 years. During this period, he became chairman of the juvenile panel and chairman of the adult bench from 1950 to 1972.

For 3 years from 1942 to 1945, he was co-opted to Kendal Borough Council and was involved in the appointment of Alfred Wainwright to his post in the borough treasurer's office.

In 1948, he was elected to the Westmorland Executive Council (National Health Service) and was the only member to serve from the inception of the council until reorganisation in 1974. For the last 6 years, he was its chairman. Without having the advantage of the educational opportunities that exist now, Mr. Richardson was an able, effective and loyal servant of the former Borough of Kendal and the county of Westmorland.

Hugh Richardson.

*(This obituary first appeared in the Westmorland Gazette 3/12/04 and is reproduced by kind permission of the Editor)*

### **THE REVEREND CANON CHARLES RICHARDSON**

He was brought up in London but 'met' mountains in Wales with his scout group. He first came to the Lakes when he was 18. I had an earlier introduction having been taken up a mountain at 13 by my grandfather who was a member of the FRCC. Before we were married, we enjoyed a holiday in the very new stone hut at Wasdale Head below Scafell Pike at a time when cars would never have been able to reach anywhere near it. When Raw Head was first an FRCC hut, we stayed there with our 2 oldest boys, who were 7 and 5, in highly primitive conditions with very rough wooden bunks and no taps. On a later visit, my husband helped to hack away at a huge rock, which blocked the smooth entrance to the original barn. We had many happy memories of our times at Raw Head. One summer, during bilberry time, my husband and FRCC member Eric Hargreaves

set off to make a circuit from Raw Head, of all the FRCC huts then existing. The first stop was Wasdale, then via Black Sail and Ennerdale to Salving House at Rosthwaite. It was then back over Stake Pass. Meanwhile, I prepared a welcoming meal including a huge bilberry pie. The 'heroes' were too exhausted as a result of their efforts and the heat to eat any of this and staggered off to bed. My husband died at 91 with fond memories of his time as an FRCC member.

Mneme Richardson

## ALAN ROBERTS

We first met Alan in 1976 when he joined us on the expedition to climb Changabang 6864m in the Indian Himalaya area of the Gearwheel. He had all the right climbing credentials for this expedition, but just as important, his easy going, cheerful nature made him the ideal travelling companion. His contribution helped to put five climbers on the summit.

Alan had flown out to join the other members of this trip, but travelled back overland in the expedition vehicle. His happy go lucky personality was not always appreciated. On one occasion he woke everyone up whistling and singing at 12.30am having read his watch upside down. We had only been asleep for two hours and already the porridge was halfway made! Conversely, he was a compassionate and steadfast friend to Eileen when she had received sad news from home.

After Changabang, Alan always kept in touch. Wherever in the world he travelled a postcard would arrive detailing his exploits, which were varied and exciting.

Born in Liverpool, he attended the then Charlotte Mason College in Ambleside.

As a qualified BMC guide, Alan worked in many outdoor establishments including Eskdale Outward Bound, Loch Eil and since 1987 Bowles Outdoor Centre. He spent several years in Hong Kong and also worked in America, Africa, New Zealand and China. The thousands of students that came into contact with Alan will have benefited hugely from his unique ability to communicate and enthuse at all levels.

When he joined the Club in 1979, we were only too pleased to support his application. He was looking forward to moving back to the Lake District, but his premature death at the age of 63 left his many friends shocked and saddened.

To all that knew him, Alan's legacy will be one of friendship and fun times spent in the great outdoors.

Syd & Eileen Clark

## DERRICK ROBINSON

Derrick was born in Ilkeston, Derbyshire on 26<sup>th</sup> February, 1928.

He and his wife Edna moved to the small village of Apperknowle near Chesterfield in 1967. Up to Derrick's retirement in 1993 he worked in the Engineering department at the local Technical College.

I first met Derrick walking in the Peak District with other fellow FRCC members. He was a very keen walker and enjoyed many club meets. He was a most useful member on maintenance meets at Rawhead, which he attended regularly.

In his early years, he was a keen cyclist and entered into competitive cycle racing.

His other main interest was his collection of MG sports cars, which he refurbished with great skill and care.

Derrick was a very interesting companion. He will be missed by all of us who walked with him most weekends, especially his wife Edna.

Albert Hattersley.

## ERNEST SHEPHERD

Another 'Peter Pan' has been shown to be mortal. No longer will we be able to ask 'Old Ernest' for older information, which would be given willingly and meticulously. For instance, ask the time and it would come back as 8.37 not a sloppy "about half eight". His climbing was the same, precise, neat and well thought out, accomplished, with a running commentary – pity one has not been taped. Ernest, with his thorough approach, would never get lost – Oh no! as he got lost in Upper Eskdale or down Longstrathdale instead of Grains Gill, etc., or down Nidderdale instead of Wharfedale.

He was back to his thorough approach teaching and advising on mountain matters running LEA courses, CCPR, Army Apprentices amongst others. He gave up much time to these with detriment to his own standard on rock. In the 40s, 50s, and early 60s, these contacts were important in keeping the Yorkshire Mountaineering Club slowly expanding. He had a few incidents, e.g., using the hall banister as a belay resulting in the wrecking of said banister – explain that away! Taken in hand by others, he went up a couple of grades, much to the annoyance of one member, who had professed that Ernest would fall off the crux – instead he sailed up, thereupon said spectator took off his hat and stamped upon it! Ernest enjoyed Scotland at Easter but who but he could have his supply of bacon eaten – by a cow!

He had several seasons in the Alps including tearing the trousers of one thrusting continental on a Piz Bernina ridge. But he was getting to like the Mediterranean where he had served in the war. He also developed a



liking for red wine. A favourite area was the Calanques and he was moving towards the then Yugoslavia where several groups benefited from his detailed information. The same applied to Majorca. As can be seen, he had an independent spirit, collecting a broken wrist one year, a sore back another. Ernest was 'democratic', he knew where he was going, you could join him if you wished but he knew where he was going. He enjoyed trespassing – as one land owner said pointing a stick 'as for him, he goes where he likes'.

He had many other interests, rugby, cycling (Bradford start, Tan Hill for lunch and return), classical music (President of Bradford Music Club), photography, (President of Bradford Camera Club and many photos published). There was always plenty of interest for discussion during walks. It was a privilege and a pleasure to have known him.

Jim Walton

### **GORDON CAMPBELL SAYER**

Gordon was born in Workington in 1932. I met him whilst at Infant School in 1938 and so began a close friendship lasting 68 years. On leaving Workington Grammar School, he went to Manchester University to study chemistry where he obtained both Bachelor and Doctorate degrees. During his research period in organic chemistry, he followed his supervisor to work at the Dyson Perrins laboratory at Oxford University to complete his research, obtaining a Manchester PhD by choice.

On the job front, he worked at a Royal Ordnance factory in Somerset in lieu of doing national service. Following this, he joined Glaxo at Barnard Castle. He then went to Upjohn Pharmaceuticals in Kalamazoo, Michigan for 6 years. On return from the USA, he had a job in London with National Research and Development Corporation and was living at Chalfont St. Peter. The pull of the north took him and his family to Royal Deeside from where he eventually retired. He spent the remainder of his life at Dalbeattie.

Our first venture on to the "hills" as young schoolboys took us just outside Workington. It was the longest day of the year and we wanted to take advantage of it. We set off on foot and found a steep embankment involving soil, gravel and tree root climbing. Time whizzed by unnoticed by us, not knowing that our parents had organised a search. Thus ended our first adventure, with a good "telling-off" on our return home.

Gordon became a strong walker and climber and was a life member of the FRCC. He never lost his keen interest for the hills throughout his life. His other main interests were Scottish Country Dancing, playing the bagpipes and bird and butterfly watching. He regularly talked of the great times he had at club meets and, in particular, the New Year meets at Langdale. I joined him on a Manchester

University Mountaineering Club meet in the West Jotenheim Mountains of Norway where we climbed the Skagastolind. On this meet, he developed a liking for strong goat's cheese – not to the taste of the others in the party who named it "wagon grease". He had one alpine holiday meet at Chamonix culminating in the ascent of the Aiguille Chardonnet, other achievements were the Lakeland 3000 footers done in 11 hours and the Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon round.

Mention must be made of his joy in attending the Scottish meets and our regular gatherings at Birkness Coach House and our May meets in Scotland. He met numerous friends throughout his life and always had many a tale to tell from his encyclopaedic memory.

Unfortunately his health deteriorated in recent years and he was unable to get onto the hills though he enjoyed hearing of others hill doings.

Gordon died on 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2006 and his ashes are to be scattered on Meall Fuar Mhonaidh near Drumnadrochit and overlooking Loch Ness.

Our sympathies go to his wife, 2 sons, daughter and grandchildren.

Eric Ivison.

### **MISS P.M. WATERWORTH**

Pam Waterworth died on 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2004, suddenly after a short illness, though she had been in poor health for some years and no longer able to get out on the mountains. She was born in Blackburn in 1920 and remained a Lancastrian at heart all her life. A career in nursing was cut short by the onset of severe deafness, which she met with courage and determination. She took up bacteriology and became personal assistant to the late Professor L.P. Garrod, an international authority on antibiotics.

Pam became a full member of the FRCC in 1963, being introduced by the London Section, of which she was chairman in 1973-75. She enjoyed both fell walking and rock climbing in the ordinary grades. A person of many parts, she was skilled in church embroidery and worked to professional standards, with many vestments and other articles to her credit. She was also an accomplished cook, an invitation to lunch or dinner was something to look forward to: guess what was in the soup, followed by an innovative main course, and perhaps a pavlova!

Pam had many friends and many of her friendships were long-lasting, including some from her schooldays. Her friendship was warm and understanding, and her several goddaughters testify to the support she gave them. Above all we shall remember her courage in the face of adversity, her quiet humour and the pleasure her friendship gave us.

Perrin makes voluminous use of footnotes, which occasionally exceed narrative in length. Readers who despise them as unwelcome distraction should head elsewhere, for there is scant relief in these pages, but the author makes them so interesting and anecdotal that they almost draw the reader into an intimate confidence. Of Whillans' Enfield 350cc bike, Perrin says (p.129): "They still make them in India, and they can be re-imported back into this country. So for those who want to relive the total Don Whillans experience, start saving your rupees ..." Magnificent stuff!

The volume features an abundance of engaging photographs from Whillans' childhood (and plumper dotage) matched only by the relative paucity of material from his pomp. The Rock and Ice were, presumably, too busy climbing great climbs to record them all. The characteristically grainy black-and-whites include the well-known shots of Esso Extra and Sentinel Crack but omit, strangely, the atmospheric Woubits, surely one of his defining moments. A quartet of photographs from Stanage, Froggatt and Curbar edges stands out well.

Whillans achieved his best on rock before age 28, and on the high mountains at 38. Thereafter it was (literally) downhill. This penetrating biography throws into cruel, sharp focus the contrast between his 1950s ascendancy and the non-combative circuit lecturer of later years. Did he *really* achieve so little on British rock after 1961? Was the metamorphosis into "individualistic, subversive ... cult hero of the B team", a decade later, so pronounced? Perrin certainly believes so, and presents his case throughout a revealing chapter 17, which encapsulates the growth of the Whillans myth after Everest.

Through a whispered, introspective epilogue, Whillans is spirited back to where it all began – the Chew Valley (where, ironically, Don contributed no new climbs). It is a tender passage befitting, perhaps, one whose love of wild country, and its creatures, jostled with a grim abrasiveness towards the world in general. Perrin does not pass ultimate judgement. He places his facts before us, "with kindness", and we decide. The result is an endearingly balanced account of a formidably difficult subject, and a stunning feast of a book.

Reviewer: Simon Jefferies

## ON THIN ICE

Alpine Climbs in the Americas, Asia and the Himalaya

Author: Mick Fowler

Published by Bâton Wicks, 2005, Price £18.99

ISBN: 1-898573-58-1

In his introduction Chris Bonington comments on Mick Fowler as being the mountaineer's mountaineer and certainly his approach and wide ranging

activities continue to underline this appellation from 1989. This is the second volume of Mick Fowler's memoirs.

Consisting of seventeen short pieces this book would be seen as a 'dippers' delight. Reading it in order I must admit it took until section six, 'Changabang 1997', for me to feel any involvement with the tales being related; it was only the comments about Roger Payne that started coming off the page in a most amusing and instructive manner. Here was a person and personality that one would like to have on any difficulty fraught expedition. That may be it; elsewhere there is little of any other character in the stories that make it further than the printed word.

One of the extraordinary things about Fowler is that he has and continues to combine a career as one of the world's leading climbers with a full-time career high in the Inland Revenue. In these tales we can see his limited holiday time often pushed his acclimatisation schedules beyond the normal, which few others could match. There are flashes of humour, typically created by the use of understatement, but the writing hardly ever grips the reader, even when describing some of the fearful situations Mick has undoubtedly experienced. Also for much of the book there is little sense of awe and wonder that the mountains and mountaineering can often inspire. Someone once said to me, "you artists just don't realise the esteem people who are not artists hold you in"; the same might be said of mountaineers. *On Thin Ice*, for much of the time, unfortunately fails to exploit this inherent advantage. It is obvious that Fowler's expeditions are more intense and gripping than his book manages to portray.

While it is definitely a drier read than Andy Cave's recent book 'Learning to Breathe' is it still worth a read for the insights it has to offer? Perhaps it is, a friend said, "a good read maybe, but only if you're a climber". Well I go on a few small and easy expeditions from time to time and still I was not engaged except for the odd section or two. There is the odd snippet of general interest. In Peru with Yates, for example, we find out that Simon actually sold the 'Void' penknife to pay for food on the walk out and there is an interesting description of the ground Simpson crawled over "just about the most difficult walking country imaginable. Even upright on two legs I was having trouble, the thought of crawling, dragging a broken leg behind me, did not bear contemplation".

*On Thin Ice* is a dry, perhaps over dry, understated saunter through some of Fowler's expeditions. His lightweight and fast approach usually involves only a few companions, often on major first ascents, and occasionally on unknown descents. We are invited to visit places from Jordan to the Himalaya and share in activities of a collection of climbing partners which include some of the biggest names in mountaineering. There is Taweche in Nepal with